Thomas Wathen (1.)

NEW DESCRIPTION
OF
BLENHEIM,
THE SEAT OF HIS GRACE
THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH:
Containing a full and accurate Account of the
PAINTINGS, TAPESTRY, AND FURNITURE;
A PICTURESQUE TOUR OF THE
GARDENS AND PARK;
AND A
General Description of the China Gallery, &c.
WITH A
PRELIMINARY ESSAY
ON
LANDSCAPE GARDENING.

——————— not the vale
Of TEMPE, famed in song, nor IDA's grove
Such beauty boasts. LORD LITTELTON's Blenheim.

Qui fait aimer les champs, fait aimer la vertu.
DE LILLE.

THE FIFTH EDITION, CORRECTED.
Embellished with an elegant COLOURED PLAN of the PARK, &c.

LONDON:
Printed by J. Crowder, Warwick-square,
FOR CADELL AND DAVIS, STRAND; AND E. NEWBERY,
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD:
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

1800.

TO

THEIR GRACES,

The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough,

THIS DESCRIPTION

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED;

AS AN HUMBLE TESTIMONY OF PROFOUND

VENERATION

FOR WHATEVER IS AMIABLE IN PRIVATE LIFE,

OR CAPABLE OF REFLECTING REAL LUSTRE

ON EXALTED RANK;

BY THEIR GRACES

MOST DEVOTED, AND MOST

OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,

WILLIAM MAVOR.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

A FORMER EDITION.

NO publications are more entertaining or useful than local delineations and descriptions, drawn with fidelity and taste: they enable persons to form a just idea of remarkable places to which fortune or situation denies them access; and without such aids occasional spectators, who have not leisure to trace every beauty for themselves, must inevitably lose half the pleasure and satisfaction to be derived from their EXCURSIONS; and at best carry with them an evanescent impression, and an imperfect idea of what they have seen. Few places possess more attractions than BLENHEIM; and yet few places have received less justice from the POET or

HISTORIAN.

HISTORIAN.—WHEATLEY and GILPIN, who had every requisite qualification to do it justice, have only mentioned it in a cursory manner; and LORDS LYTTELTON and MANSFIELD lived too near the æra of the first Duke of MARLBOROUGH's exploits, to describe the place farther than might serve as a vehicle for the praise of the HERO. As for those who have viewed it solely with the eyes of critics, their strictures can be of little use to the public in general: "when men begin to reason, they cease to feel" the beauties either of nature or of art.

The present work is respectfully offered as an attempt at more appropriate delineation; and the Author is happy to find, that the public has shewn it that favourable and candid attention, which, in every case, ought ultimately to be the reward of him, who, by honest arts, aspires to its unbiassed patronage and protection.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIFTH EDITION.

THE demand for this little volume has been regularly increasing, since its first publication in 1787; a pleasing proof to the Author, that it is not destitute of utility to the numerous and respectable visitors of Blenheim.

Animated by this encouragement and approbation, he has revised the whole with diligent attention, and made such additions and alterations as circumstances and a long acquaintance with the subject seemed to require.

He has been the more anxious to do this, because it is possible the work may never

never receive any farther improvement from his hands; and because, should his name deserve to descend to posterity, on account of more important, though not more pleasing labours, it will infallibly be connected with Woodstock, and with BLENHEIM in particular.

CON-

CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION.

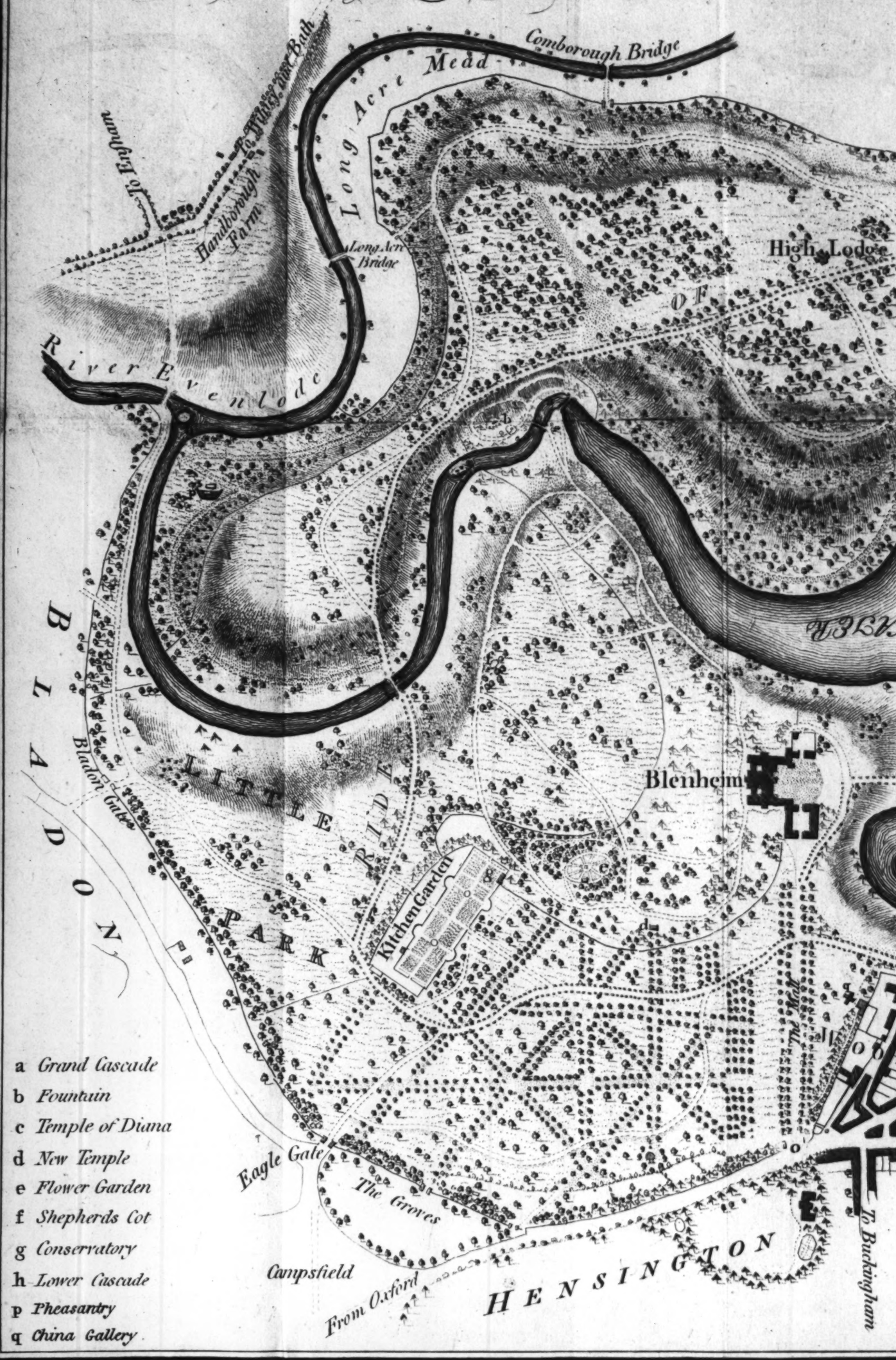
BLENHEIM may be seen every afternoon, from three to five o'clock, except on Sundays and public Days.

COMPANY *who arrive in the morning may take the ride of the Park before dinner, and after that visit the Palace.*

The CHINA GALLERY, PARK, *and* GARDENS, *will, on proper application, be shewn at any hour of the day, except during the time of Divine Service on Sunday.*

*** A few plans of BLENHEIM PARK on grand Eagle French Paper, plain or coloured, for framing, may be had where the DESCRIPTION is sold. Price 1s. and 1s. 6d.

A Plan of Blenheim Palace, Gardens, Park, Plantatio



Published Jan.y 1st 1797 by T. Cadell Strand.

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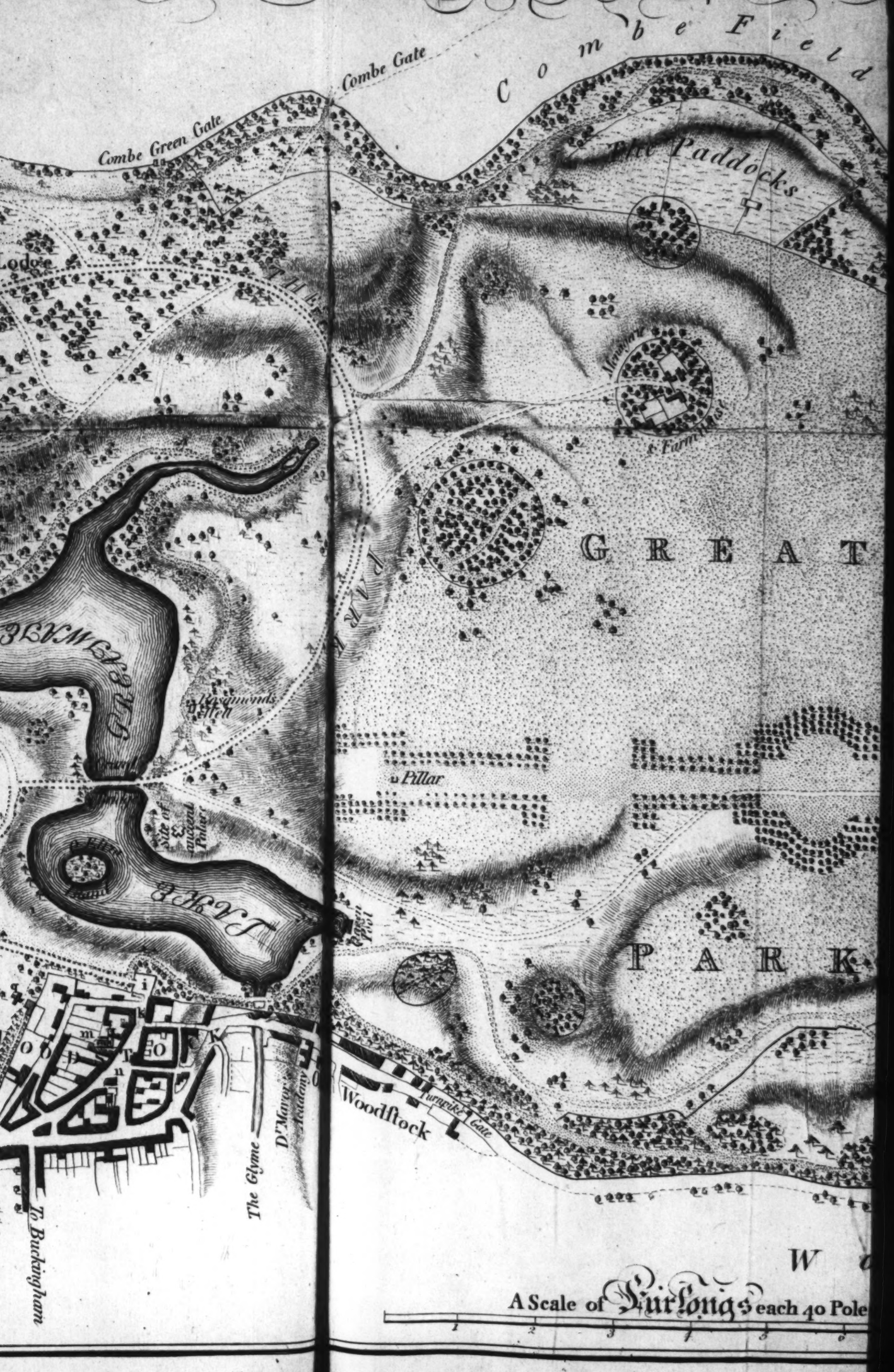

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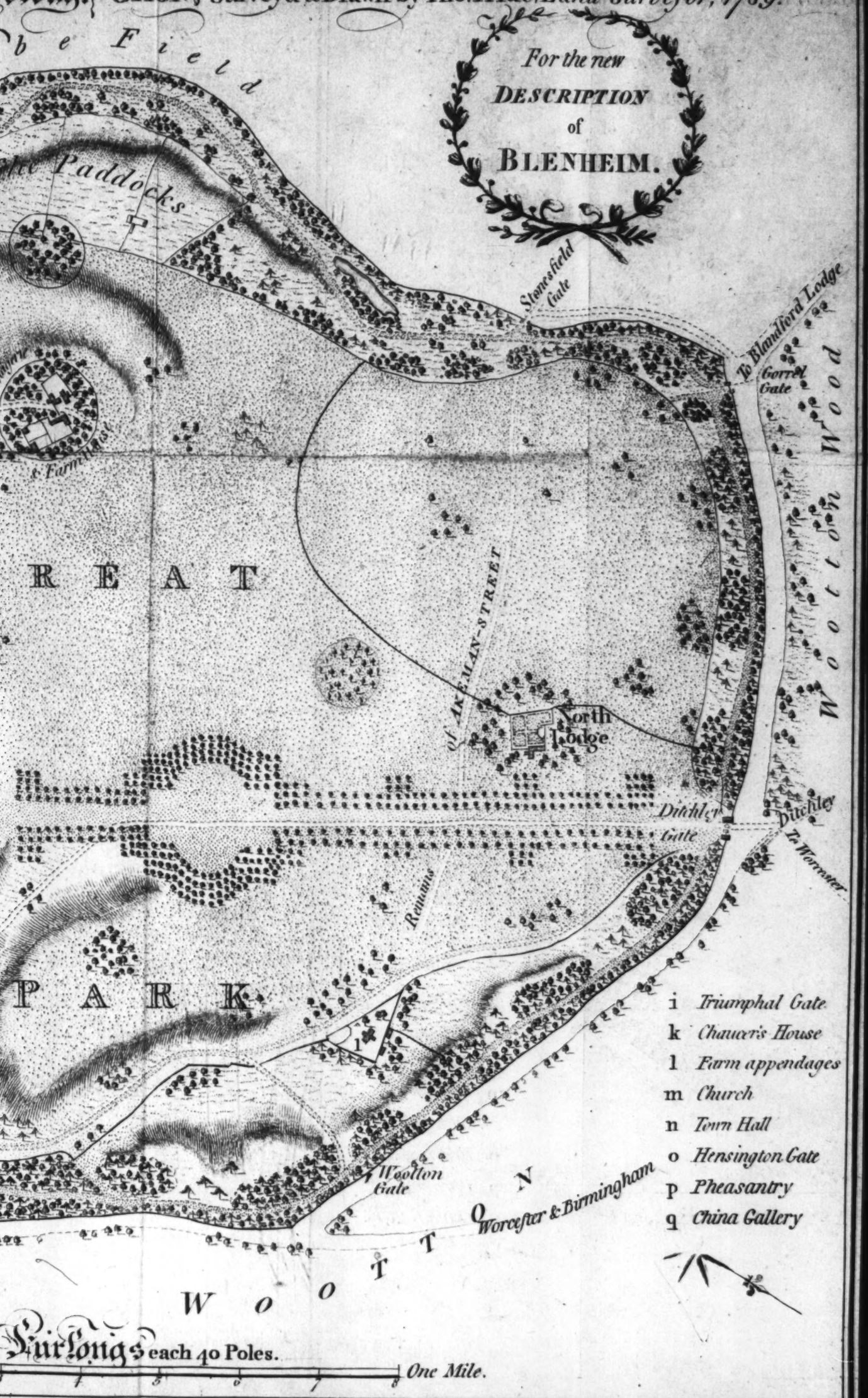
Borough Oxon, Surveyd & Drawn by Thos. Pride, Land-Surveyor, 1789.



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PRELIMINARY ESSAY

ON

LANDSCAPE GARDENING.

NATURAL Taste is the foundation of all picturesque embellishment. To seize the grand outline with the mind's eye, to adapt the design to the predominant features in the landscape, to unfold the beauties of nature by the masterly touches of art, is the sublime province of the ornamental composer of rural scenery.

That this science has been cultivated with the greatest success in this country, even jealousy and national vanity will not pretend to deny. Foreign writers, distinguished for their taste, have allowed the English the pre-eminence in landscape and ornamental gardening, and that they were

the first who emancipated themselves from the trammels of prejudice; and recurring to nature, which had long been banished from the seats of the great, invited her to her deserted abodes, and gave her a new and imposing aspect.

KENT saw the incongruity of artificial design. The straight walk, the clipped hedge, the tortured yew, sunk beneath the superior chastity of his taste. He made as much progress as an innovator, who had a prevailing bad taste to contend with, could be expected to do. Perhaps his own was not quite correct. One age seldom unfolds an idea, and brings that idea to perfection. We have had schools of painting as well as of ornamental scenery. Some masters were distinguished for one excellence, and some for another. The force of genius has at intervals prevailed over disadvantages; and produced works to be admired, though not in every respect deserving imitation. Reynolds, with a mind enlightened by science, and chastised by taste, embodied the form, and caught the character which he transfused

into

into the colouring on the canvas. He grouped—he combined. He followed nature, and therefore succeeded; but he had great artists among his predecessors, who paved the way for the attainment of excellence.

It was not thus with picturesque embellisment. The science was comparatively new; and where attempts had been made, they were in general conducted on a wrong plan, or proceeded from a vitiated taste.

Kent had every obstacle in his way; yet he accomplished much; and gratitude is due to him who deviates from a wrong path, and aspires to perfection, though he may not reach her temple.

To Kent succeeded BROWN—a man originally bred a gardener; and from this fortuitous circumstance, without a particle of his genius, every person who can superintend a kitchen-garden, or handle a spade, has thought himself qualified to quit his sphere, and attempt design. But Brown possessed an originality of conception, a poet's eye, and an instinctive taste for

rural embellishment. He was at last animated and inspired by some of his own creations.

He saw the deformity of perverted beauty with keener optics than Kent—he viewed nature with the enthusiasm of a lover; and though it cannot be denied, that he sometimes tricked her out in meretricious ornaments, and patched her with unmeaning clumps, he never lost sight of her prominent charms, and his worst errors are only like minute pimples on a beautiful face *.

We have, however, seen this mighty master of picturesque embellishment severely censured by some of his own countrymen, who, indulging too much in the visions of theory, have denied him the merit of practical excellence. Because Brown could execute better than he could describe, and worked by self-taught rules, he has been attacked with asperity; and some of his most capital performances

* Brown, as an ingenious critic observes, made it his maxim to follow and to copy Nature; whom, if he did not always represent in the images he set up to her honour, he at least caused to be admired and adored.

have

have been ascribed to chance, or to a dereliction of his own principles.

But who can reduce the infinite variety of situations that are to be improved to any systematic principles! The powerful genius of a place will imperiously set rules at defiance; and, in fact, art can only be the handmaid of nature, whose beauties, presenting a boundless variety, are alike indignant of confinement and controul.

The attempt at system is only an effort to bring us back to what has justly been exploded. "I have no magical skill in planting roses," says Gray. Nature disdains the fetters of art. The best principles can never be universally applicable to all situations in an equal degree. The painter may invent or reject at pleasure, and adhere to the rules of his art: the embellisher of landscape is more confined in his operations; he cannot always reject—he can only improve. His invention may cover some defects; but it cannot always command the excellencies he might wish. Besides, a flat surface and an extended natural scene are very different

materials to work on, and will have very different effects when viewed by the eye of natural taste *, the only just criterion of rural embellishment.

The chef d'œuvre of Brown was the improvements at Blenheim. He had the noblest field to display his talents on, and he did not labour in vain. But though he traced the outline with effect, the correct taste of the noble possessor of this magnificent place has enabled him to give it many additional touches, and to improve its drapery. He has, however, preserved the unity of the design, and only heightened the colouring. Who that now visits these picturesque scenes can deny, but that plantations have been applied to all the principal purposes which M. De Girardin, perhaps copying from his beloved Ermenonville, conceives ought to be their grand objects:

"To form the perspective or side scenes

* By natural taste is meant that quick perception of the beauties and deformities of nature, which enables a person at once to decide. No faculty is more rare. It requires the union of a poetic imagination with a correct judgment.

of

of the foreground that may best connect the distances with the principal points of view.

"To raise such elevations or scenes, as may give relief even to an absolute flat.

"To hide all disagreeable objects.

"To give more extent to those that are pleasing, by concealing their terminations behind a mass of wood; by which means the imagination continues them beyond the point where they are seen.

"To give an agreeable outline to all surfaces, whether of land or water."

These are the ideas of a master; and we here see them realized. They who think justly, in matters not under the influence of passion, will generally think the same: hence often coincidence without intention.

But while Brown has been too indiscriminately condemned, he has also been too lavishly praised, where he is least defensible. His clumps must in many cases be given up by his most zealous partizans, or receive a degree of connection by intermediate planting, as has been done at

Blenheim, to preserve the uniformity of the scene. His unvarying circular belts too, where they are not broken into masses, as we see them here, and when they serve to exclude the prospect of the surrounding country, are real defects in picturesque beauty. No kind of property is less the object of envy, or more grateful to the eye, than to take possession of a country in an extensive view: it contributes to the general beauty, and is equally enjoyed by all, without offence to any. That display of nature is certainly most magnificent, which is bounded only by the horizon: where scenes under the immediate view present the most captivating charms, and where distance harmonizes with the fore ground.

Such is the prevailing character of Blenheim. But let us not degrade it to a mere object to please the eye of taste, however refined. It presents views to interest the heart. To the picturesque landscape which pleases the sight, it adds the moral landscape that delights the mind. In its wide extent, it exhibits accommodations for

for age, remunerated for its services in youth—It is peopled with happy labourers—it is stocked with cattle—it waves with corn *. These not only enliven its most brilliant scenes, but give them a charm to the heart of sensibility, which no inanimate or useless embellishments can convey.

* SONNET, on seeing some hundred additional acres in Blenheim Park converted into tillage.

Oft o'er this scene, with raptur'd eye, the Muse
Has stray'd, while Fancy's magic glass
In fairy tints has painted ancient views,
And shewn in long array Fame's fav'rites pass:
Th' illustrious line of names renown'd of old,
Imagination wakes—and startles to behold.—
Here RURAL BEAUTY fix'd her pristine reign,
And lur'd the Monarch to her native seat;
Here ev'ry spot—the shade, the slope, the plain,
Is sacred ground, and worn by hallow'd feet.
And shall brown CERES o'er the space preside,
Where Kings have ponder'd, and a CHAUCER sung?
Yes, goddess, come! with thee the gifts abide,
That prop the pomp of State, that tune the poet's tongue.
1795.

NEW DESCRIPTION

OF

BLENHEIM.

THE Palace or Castle of BLENHEIM, one of the most magnificent piles of architecture in this kingdom, and perhaps in the whole world, stands in the finest part of one of the finest counties in England, within half a mile of the borough of New Woodstock; distant about eight miles from the University of Oxford, and sixty-three from London. The surrounding country is fertile and irriguous, adorned with woods, and abounding with seats of the nobility and gentry; the air is pure, mild, and salubrious; and all the necessaries and many of the elegancies of life are plentiful and choice.

BLENHEIM was built at the public expence in the reign of Queen ANNE, by whom, with the concurrence of Parliament, which voted half a million * for its completion, it was conferred, together with the annexed demesnes, on the most illustrious JOHN DUKE of MARLBOROUGH, as a testimony of royal favour and national gratitude for his transcendent services, and the many signal victories he had gained over the French and Bavarians, particularly that near the village of Blenheim, on the banks of the Danube, from which this noble palace receives its name. This victory being atchieved on the second day of August, 1704, it was enacted, "That on the same day of every year for ever, the inheritors of his Grace's honours and titles should render at WINDSOR to her Majesty, her heirs and successors, one standard or colours, with three fleurs-de-lis painted thereon, as an acquittance for all manner of rents, suits, and services, due to the Crown."

* Though parliament was apparently so liberal, immense sums have been expended by the family on this noble structure and its accompaniments, to bring it to its present state.

The

The architect of Blenheim was Sir JOHN VANBRUGH, who, though he has been blamed, with some shew of reason, for the heaviness of his general designs, must at least stand acquitted in this instance, when it is considered that strength and durability were principal objects to be regarded, in a pile intended to remain a monument of British valour and British generosity, till the latest periods of time—

> Till time's remotest stage design'd to prove
> A CHURCHILL's valour, and a Nation's love*.

Accordingly we find both the plan and the execution excellently adapted to answer those momentous purposes; and while the more modern and shewy fabrics are only the boast of an age, Blenheim seems calculated to stand uninjured by the lapse of years, and to excite the admiration of foreigners as well as natives, in proportion as it is better known.

But Vanbrugh does not stand in need

* The verses interspersed, where not otherwise acknowledged, are generally taken from BLENHEIM, a Poem, by the author of this Description, first published in 1787, and which may be purchased separately.

of

of the poor compliment of an apology for his design,—he deserves very considerable applause for his judgment in a circumstance which has principally exposed him to the censure of pretended critics: he has rendered this structure characteristic and expressive of its destination. Its massy grandeur, its spacious portals, and its lofty towers, recal the ideas of defence and security; with these we naturally associate the hero for whom it was erected, and thus find it emblematic of his talents and pursuits *.

From Woodstock, the usual approach, we enter the park through a TRIUMPHAL ARCH, or spacious portal of the Corinthian order, raised to the memory of John Duke

* When this Description was first published, the strictures on Vanbrugh's Architecture had been so long and so often bandied about by unreflecting prejudice, that the Author was fearful to bestow even an adequate eulogium on this noble pile. He has not the vanity to think that he has been able to give a turn to the public opinion in this respect; but he certainly has the pleasure to find, that several writers of indisputable taste, since that period, have stepped forward in vindication of his general sentiments, and have even far exceeded his moderate commendation. But the age of Blenheim is verging towards a century; and the reign of error or of prejudice is seldom of longer duration.

of

of Marlborough, by Sarah his Duchess; and charged with the following inscription, on the side next Woodstock:

PORTA HAEC EXTRVCTA EST ANNO POST OBITVM
ILLVSTRISSIMI
JOHANNIS DVCIS DE MARLBOROVGH JVSSV ATQVE
AVSPICIIS
SARAE CONJVGIS DILECTISSIMAE CVI TESTAMENTO
COMMENDAVIT OPERA
QVIBVS VLTIMAM IPSE MANVM NON IMPOSVERAT.
QVANTA FVERINT DVCIS IN REMPVBLICAM MERITA
INGRESSO TIBI
PLVRIBVS DICET COLVMNA QVAM OPTIMAE
CONJVGIS PIETAS PONI VOLVIT
VT PERENNE ESSET IPSIVS GLORIAE SVAEQVE
DILECTIONIS MONVMENTVM.
A. D. MDCCXXIII.

Towards the park is the subsequent translation:

THIS GATE WAS BVILT THE YEAR AFTER THE DEATH
OF THE MOST ILLVSTRIOVS
JOHN DVKE OF MARLBOROVGH BY ORDER OF SARAH
HIS MOST BELOVED WIFE
TO WHOM HE LEFT THE SOLE DIRECTION OF THE
MANY THINGS
THAT REMAINED VNFINISHED OF THIS FABRICK.
THE SERVICES OF THIS GREAT MAN TO HIS
COVNTRY THE PILLAR
WILL TELL YOV WHICH THE DUCHESS HAS ERECTED
FOR A LASTING
MONVMENT OF HIS GLORY AND HER AFFECTION
TO HIM.
MDDCCXXIII.

On entering the park, one of the most enchanting prospects in nature discloses itself

itself to our view. The PALACE appears in front, the towers of which rise into the horizon; on the left, part of the borough of WOODSTOCK; on the right, a broad and deep valley, through which flows a river of equal extent, with bold and winding shores, at a proportionate distance intersected, but visibly not terminated, by a BRIDGE of corresponding magnificence to the grandeur of the scene;—a swelling lawn, crowned with a superb and lofty COLUMN, which leaves the tallest trees that seem crowding round its base at an immense distance below, while light clumps, shady groves, and plantations of different shapes and hues skirt the bounding dales, or clothe the remoter slopes;—a second reach of water beyond the bridge, fringed by deep woods that rise to the very summit of the opposite hill, and compose a variously tinted and indented surface of luxuriant foliage—all these form an assemblage of attractions unrivalled, and conspire to strike the eye of taste with an irresistible charm. In this singularly picturesque landscape, the beautiful

and

and the sublime are most intimately combined: all that can please, elevate, or astonish, display themselves at once; and the mind is at a loss to know to what source it is chiefly indebted for its pleasure, or rather what is the predominant character of the objects that arrest its attention.

At a small distance from this portal, towards the right, is the *Centrum Phonicum*, or speaker's place, of a very remarkable polysyllabical articulate ECHO *; which, according to Dr. Plott, in his Natural History of Oxfordshire, will distinctly repeat seventeen syllables in a calm day, and in the night twenty: but the demolition of the ancient palace, which stood on the brow of the opposite hill, the extension of the river, or some other latent cause, has in a great measure diminished its surprising powers. However, a very superior ECHO may be heard by a speaker sta-

* Soon after the publication of this description, a gentleman informed the author, that a friend of his, a stranger, had hunted all over the park in order to discover the echo. On enquiring if he spoke, or if he expected the *lady* to break silence first, the *gentleman* replied he did not know; but that this was certainly an important question.

tioned

tioned near an old cedar tree, between ROSAMOND's Well and the bridge; and it is nothing unusual for those who are acquainted with this circumstance to compliment the vocal nymph with a familiar salutation, which is speedily returned with amazing exactness of articulation, and reiterated according to the stillness of the surrounding scene. Musical sounds have a delightful effect on this spot.

A broad gravel-road, preserving one uniform direction for a quarter of a mile, and gradually diverging from the sweep of the river, conducts us towards the eastern gate of the palace. This road is almost wholly open. On the Woodstock side, only a few small rising clumps appear, which assist to conceal the boundary from other points of view, and to break the line of some private houses; a few trees, fancifully disposed, skirt the slope, and others of a larger growth range with the stream on its very edge, and afford some pretty glades into the water between their trunks and boughs; but their heads scarcely rising above the level of the walk, they

serve

serve rather to vary than to conceal. Near the Home Lodge, on the left, the New Walk commences: it extends about a quarter of a mile under the park wall, amidst the covert of plantations, which afford shelter from the winds, and shade from the heat.

As we advance, the prospects diversify, the fine rural scenes in the northern part of the park become more and more conspicuous; and to the north-west, the eye takes in an ample field of cheerful objects over a wide extent of champaign and woodland country, to the extremity of WHICHWOOD Forest, which is finely contrasted with the deep umbrage that overhangs the lake, and intercepts the view. This road, which is only lateral and circuitous, to avoid the stiffness of a direct approach, at last falls into another, which beginning at the noble entrance on the south of Woodstock, is lined by double rows of stately trees, and forms a beautiful and spacious vista to the Palace.

By the eastern gate, over which is a reservoir capable of containing five hundred hogsheads

hogsheads of water *, we enter an arcaded quadrangle; on the right, consisting of offices; on the left, chiefly occupied by the THEATRE, which has been recently fitted up in a style of peculiar elegance, and with appendages correspondent to the munificence and fortune of the owner. The stage is large, and is furnished with proper changes of scenery, and fixtures: the seats for the audience are easy and commodious, and capable of accommodating two hundred persons, without including the side-boxes. The whole has a grand and a pleasing effect.

From this quadrangle, we proceed into the area, where the NORTH FRONT opens to the view; a noble piece of architecture, in a mixed original stile, three hundred and forty-eight feet from wing to wing, and highly ornamented, particularly in the centre, which stands on Corinthian pillars of vast magnitude.

This is the grand approach; and to it we are properly conducted over the val-

* This water, which supplies the house, is raised by an engine on Aldersea's construction, erected in Old Woodstock mill.

ley,

ley, through which the river winds, by a magnificent bridge, which has been frequently compared to the RIALTO at Venice, though without any parallel of application. The diameter of its centre arch is an hundred and one feet:

> Thro' which the Danube might collected pour
> His spacious urn.

The effect of this bridge, which unites two hills, and gives an uniformity and consistency to the scene, that would otherwise be disjointed and complex, is peculiarly grand; and its application one of the happiest efforts of judgment. Beyond it, on a considerable eminence, in the midst of a fine lawn, is a stately column or pillar, one hundred and thirty feet high, on the top of which stands a statue of the immortal John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough,

> ——— Like a guardian God sublime,
> And awes the subject plain.

Every circumstance that enters into the composition of the scene unites to promote one vast and beautiful effect. The north front itself is of such magnificence as to diffuse

diffuse a lustre on surrounding objects; the accompaniments are well adapted to reflect it back on the building, a fine expanse of water stretches its arms around, as if proud to embrace it, approaches in a variety of directions, spreads its animating spirit over the whole, and connects together the widely extended, and extremely diversified parts of the brilliant landcape.

The SOUTH FRONT, though less extensive, is highly elegant. It commands a calm scene, a view that, without surprising, no repetition can render indifferent; the eye rests on it with complacency, and returns to it with delight. The fore-ground is a fine lawn, frequently covered with sheep, and enlivened with pheasants, so tame as to follow their feeder; the pleasure grounds succeed; behind is a beautiful perspective of the village of BLADON, just peeping through tufted trees; and still farther, a prospect of the distant hills, which breaking one before another exhibit a succession of chains, till the last, a continuation of the CHILTERN Range through

through Berks, gradually dissolves in the almost boundless horizon on the south-west. Over the portico, which does credit to the Corinthian order, stands a colossal bust of LOUIS XIV. of France, taken from the gates of Tournay.

A glorious trophy to the Victor's fame,—
A lasting record of the GALLIC shame.

It is adorned with proper military emblems, and under it is the subsequent inscription, running along the pediment:

EUROPÆ HÆC VINDEX GENIO DECORA ALTA BRITANNO *.

Which may be rendered "*The assertor of the liberty of Europe dedicates these distinguished honours to the genius of Britain.*"

Near the eastern angle, a commodious and elegant OBSERVATORY has been

* Though this inscription has but one obvious, and can have but one consistent meaning, it has nevertheless been tortured into various; and the sentence without a verb has been the alternate stumbling-block of real ignorance and false criticism: no authorities can avail the former; the latter may be convinced of its propriety, by referring to

ÆNEAS HÆC DE DANAIS VICTORIBUS ARMA.

ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΙ ΑΠΟ ΜΗΔΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΗΒΑΙΩΝ.

And to other instances of a similar mode of expression, from sources of unquestionable purity.

erected

erected by the present Duke, amply furnished with the best astronomical apparatus, by the justly celebrated Ramsden. A grand telescope, by Herschell, presented to the Duke by his Majesty soon after the royal visit to Blenheim in 1786, and now in the library, may be reckoned a very valuable appendage: another corresponding Observatory is now fitted up, at the western angle.

The apartments of this Palace are furnished with princely magnificence: the tapestry and paintings attract universal and deserved attention; but as it is impossible to do them adequate justice in any general description, we shall conduct our readers through the grand suit of rooms, usually open to public inspection, in the order in which they are shewn, and enumerate the most celebrated productions of art in each.

Here PAINTING shews the wonders of her art,
Gains on the sense, and captivates the heart;
From mimic pencils new creations rise,
Start into life, and wear its native dyes;
Bold as the form PROMETHEUS taught to move,
When Heaven's dread lightning he withdrew from JOVE.

Here BRUSSELS' looms their boasted skill display,
And tapestry armies stand in long array.

The

The vivid tints with war's dread horrors burn:
Here, Grief and Shame—there, Rage and Fury turn;
The lengthen'd march—the ramparts rise to sight,
And all the kindling glories of the fight.

Hail, ye great artists, whose enchanting skill
Can mould the passions, and controul the will:
Not to the eye your labours are address'd,—
They boast an influence o'er the ductile breast;
For while, entranc'd, each happy touch we view,
The moral sense becomes reform'd by you:
Beauty and order, harmony and ease,
Unite to polish, as they tend to please.

I. HALL.

Through a superb portico, on massy Corinthian columns of elegance and dimensions almost unrivalled, we enter the hall, which lies in the centre of the north, or grand front: this is also supported by fluted Corinthian pillars. The ceiling, which is the height of the building, or sixty-seven feet, while the other dimensions are in proportion, is painted by Sir James Thornhill, and allegorically represents VICTORY crowning JOHN DUKE of MARLBOROUGH, as she points to a plan of the battle of BLENHEIM. The duke

is depicted in a blue Roman dress. Over the noble marble door-case that communicates with the saloon, is a bust of the same hero, with this inscription:

ECCE VIRUM STABILES CUI GENS AUGUSTA PENATES
CUI FRACTAS TANDEM GALLIA DEBET OPES.
HIC VETEREM ANGLIACÆ VIRTUTI INSTAURAT HONOREM
SEU RES CONSILIO, SEU SIT AGENDA MANU.
NON ANIMO AUGUSTUS MELIOR NON JULIUS ARMIS
SEU MULCET GENTES, ILLE VEL ILLE DOMAT.

BEHOLD THE MAN TO DISTANT NATIONS KNOWN,
WHO SHOOK THE GALLIC, FIX'D THE AUSTRIAN THRONE,
NEW LUSTRE TO BRITANNIA'S GLORY GAVE;
IN COUNCILS PRUDENT, AS IN ACTION BRAVE.
NOT JULIUS MORE IN ARMS DISTINGUISH'D SHIN'D,
NOR COULD AUGUSTUS BETTER CALM MANKIND.

In the gallery above, on the same side, may be seen whole length portraits of Clara Eugenia, Infanta of Spain, and governess of the *Netherlands*;—of Queen Anne, by Mr. Lily;—and of a lady in a blue dress, by an unknown master. A large collection of family portraits occupy the same gallery, which runs the whole extent of the house. Below, in niches near the angles, are the MEDICEAN VENUS, and the DANCING FAWN, in bronze, from

from the originals in the Grand Duke of Tuscany's collection, and executed with inimitable skill by Maximilian Soldani Benzi, at Florence, in 1711.

The arcades on the right and left are adorned with marble termini. Below, on a black marble slab, stands a fine antique DIANA and Dog; and exactly opposite, on a similar slab, is a beautiful VASE with figures in relievo, from the antique, supposed to represent the nuptial ceremonies of the Romans.

Over the grand stair-case is a large picture, by Hudson, of Charles Duke of Marlborough and Family; and beyond the arcades, on the other side of the hall, the first Duke and Family are delineated by the pencil of Closterman.

II. BOW-WINDOW ROOM.

From the hall, we proceed along a gallery to the bow-window room. The famous battle of BLENHEIM is pourtrayed in the tapestry on the right at entrance, and occupies a considerable space. The principal action is confined to the taking

of Marshal Tallard. The battle of WYNENDALE is represented in the tapestry on the left.

Over the first door is St. Jerome, studying, very fine, by Giorgioni. Over the chimney, a most capital original picture, by Raphael, of the Virgin and Child; St. John and St. Nicolas, formerly belonging to the Capella degli Ansidei at Perrugia.

On a pannel to the right.

A fine Head after Han. Caracci, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

A head of Lady Anne Churchill, by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

A small picture of the Assumption, by Tintoret.

A female Head, by Reubens.

Two Monkies in the habit of Monks, by Teniers.

A Madona and Child, by Lionardo da Vinci.

Over the second door are two Nymphs, by an uncertain master.

Between two beautiful fluted Corinthian pillars, another portrait of Lady Anne Churchill, by Kneller.

A small

A small pendent cabinet, with a miniature Painting, by Lady Clifden.

On the next pannel.

A Man's Head unknown, by Titian.

A beautiful etching of a Wood Nymph, by the Princess Royal; given to her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough, by her Royal Highness.

An allegorical original Drawing, by Cipriani, intended as a frontispiece to the second volume of the Gemmæ Marlburienses Selectæ.

Between the opposite pillars.

A portrait of Prince Eugene.

An elegant engraving of the Marquis of Tavistock, by Watson.

On the next pannel.

A man's Head unknown, by Holbein.

An etching, by the Princess Royal.

An original Drawing, by Cipriani, the frontispiece to the first volume of the Gemmæ Marlburienses: the subject from Pliny's Nat. Hist.

Over the third door, a Battle Piece, by Wovermans.

The ceiling is painted in a novel style of simple elegance, and adorned with military emblems, by Hakewill. The window curtains and furniture are blue silk damask. Under the mirrors that adorn the pannels between the windows, are two marble slabs, on each of which is a sleeping figure, very expressively sculptured in white marble. At the other end of the room are two elegant cabinets.

III. DUKE's DRESSING ROOM.

The decorations of this apartment are rather elegant than splendid; the hangings are straw-coloured flock paper, with a rich border; the furniture is chintz.

The paintings are:

I. * 1. Venus and Adonis, by an uncertain artist; a Magdalen, by young Palma;—our Saviour in the Virgin's lap, crowning two female Martyrs, by Titian;

* The Roman numerals I. II. III. refer to the three sides of the apartment, beginning at the left: the fourth, and in the grand cabinet the third, is occupied by the windows and the mirrors. The Arabic characters, 1, 2, express the upper and lower rows of pictures on the same side. When the arrangement would not suffer this easy mode of distinction, the figures are omitted.

St.

—St. Mark penning his Gospel, by old Palma.

2. Inside view of a Church, by Steenwyck;—a prospect of a Spanish Sea Port, by Weenix; the Destruction of Pharaoh and his Host in the Red Sea, by old Frank.

II. 1. Two Beggar Boys, very characteristic, by Murillio;—Esther and Ahasuerus, by Paul Veronese;—three Beggar Boys, by Murillio.

III. 1. A Holy Family, very fine, by Reubens;—Charles Earl of Sunderland, by Kneller;—King George I. by an unknown artist;—Sleeping Venus and Satyr, with attending Cupids, from the school of Reubens.

2. A view of Althorpe, the seat of Earl Spencer, by Tilleman.

Over the chimney are two antique metal jars. Under the glass, a pair of elegant globes, by Adams.

IV. EAST DRAWING ROOM.

The hangings and furniture crimson damask; the ceiling a slight plain dome, of

an oval shape; the chimney-piece is composed of the richest veined marble. Many of the paintings are very capital.

I. 1. A Holy Family, supposed by Raphael;—the Marchioness de Havre;—the Duchess of Buckingham and Offspring;—Mary of Medicis; all by Vandyke.

2. An oval portrait of King William III. by Sir Godfrey Kneller;—Death of the Virgin Mary, by Guido;—A Holy Family, by Vandyke;—the Annunciation, by Corrégio;—an oval portrait of Lady Chesterfield, by Vandyke.

II. 1. Philip II. King of Spain, a whole length, by Titian;—a most capital and strikingly characteristic BACCHANALIAN PIECE, by Reubens;—Andromeda chained to the Rock, by the same.

2. The Offering of the Magi, by Reubens;—a French Camp, by Watteau;—a small pendent cabinet, with miniatures of the present Family; two small Landscapes, by a French artist;—Cattle, by Rosa di Tivoli; two corresponding small Landscapes, as before;—another correspond-

ing

ing cabinet, inclosing miniatures;—a Landscape, by Paul Brylle.

III. 1. A charming picture, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, representing Lady Charlotte Spencer, in the character of a Gipsey, telling her brother, Lord Henry, his fortune;—Reubens, Wife, and Child, by Reubens, a present to the first Duke, by the city of Brussels. Charles I. by Vandyke;—a Holy Family, supposed by Raphael, in his first stile of painting, a present from the town of Ghent.

2. Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I. by Vandyke;—an Angel, small, by Corregio;—Cattle and Figures, by Wovermans;—a Landscape, small, by Claude Lorrain;—a broad Day-break, very fine, by Vandermeer.

V. GRAND CABINET.

This magnificent apartment opens to the east and south, and commands the most charming scenery. The hangings and furniture are rich crimson damask, with gilding of corresponding splendor: the cornice, in particular, is extremely elegant,

and in the centre of the ceiling is a large circular gilt plume. The chimney is composed of dark-coloured marble, inlaid with white, in ornamental festoons, with an urn, projecting in relievo, which has a delightful effect; over it stand the listening Slave, and a crouching Venus in bronze, and between them two very curious jars.

The paintings are some of the most superb in any collection, particularly those of Reubens.

I. 1. A Holy Family, by Reubens;—a Madona standing on a globe, surrounded by Angels, by Carlo Maratti;—the Offering of the Magi, by Reubens.

9. A most capital picture of our Saviour blessing the Children, by Reubens.

II. 1. Filial Affection, exemplified in the Roman Daughter, by Reubens;—the Return of our Saviour from Egypt, by Reubens;—Lot's Departure out of Sodom, by Reubens, a present from the town of Antwerp.

2. Portrait of Paracelsus, by Reubens;—a Madona, her head encircled with stars, supposed the Miraculous Conception, in the

the finest stile, by Carlo Dolce—the extended hand is inimitable;—Raphael's favourite Dorothea, by himself; head of Rubens, by the same;—Pope Gregory and a Female Penitent bearing a palm branch, by Titian;—a Holy Family, by Ludovico Caracci.

VI. BLUE DRAWING ROOM.

The hangings are blue damask, with ornamental gilt bordures: the furniture corresponding. The head in the centre of the chimney is a fine piece of sculpture; the whole is delicately finished in white marble. The large gilt branches on each side above are peculiarly elegant.

The paintings are:

I. 1. Isaac blessing Jacob, by Rembrandt;—an oval in claro obscuro, very expressive, from an ancient gem, by Rebecca.

II. 1. Catharine of Medicis, in colours, almost inimitable, by Reubens;—Time clipping Cupid's wings, an allegorical painting, by Vandyke;—William Marquis of Blandford, by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

2. A Landscape, by Vandermeer;—a Dutch Family, by Ostade;—a Landscape, by Gaspard Poussin;—Dorothy Countess of Sunderland, painted by Vandyke, and immortalized by Waller;—another Landscape by Gaspard Poussin;—a small highly finished Family Piece, by Gonzales;—a beautiful little Landscape, by Wovermans.

III. 1. Ladies Caroline and Elizabeth Spencer, by Romney; the latter is represented as playing on her harp, the former in the act of taking a sketch of her sister;—on the right of which are two Heads of young Women, by Paul Veronese;—on the left our Saviour, and St. John, by Carlo Dolce;—the Woman taken in Adultery, by Rembrandt.

2. Our Saviour and the Virgin in the clouds, with a Monk paying adoration, by Hannibal Caracci;—our Saviour and the Virgin in the clouds, with accompaniments, by Tintoret;—a brilliant collection of thirty-six miniatures of different magnitudes, by various masters, among which are three of the beautiful and unfortunate MARY

Queen

Queen of Scots;—a Holy Family, by Ludovico Caracci;—Cattle and Figures, by Bambocchio.

VII. WINTER DRAWING ROOM.

The tapestry hangings of this apartment represent the four Cardinal Virtues, with their characteristic emblems and accompaniments, and in vivid beauty of colouring approach nearer to painting than any thing of the same kind in Blenheim.

I. Fortitude, with proper insignia. The man wrenching open the lion's jaws is extremely expressive.

II. On one side of the chimney, Prudence, holding a mirror to her left hand, in the action of viewing the conduct of others, that she may be the better able to regulate her own; in the right, a dart entwined with a remora, the respective emblems of speed and delay, between which Prudence observes a middle course.

On the other side of the chimney, Justice, with her balance and sword, and other distinguishing characteristics.

III. Temperance, with her curb. The River God pouring water out of his urn, is finely

finely imagined, and attracts the notice of every spectator.

The only paintings are, an animated one of Lord Stafford and his Secretary, (of which there are two others in this kingdom, all reputed originals) over the first door;—a very beautiful portrait of Mary Duchess of Richmond, with a little Girl presenting her gloves, over the chimney; and of Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Killigrew, two of Charles II.'s favourites, over the other door: all by Vandyke.

In the centre of the very elegant chimney-piece, formed of the richest marbles, is an alto relievo of Cupid and Pysche's Marriage, from the antique. A notification in Greek characters is prefixed, that Tryphon executed the original. Over, are two Centaurs in bronze, and two beautiful urns of Derbyshire spar.

In this room also are small bronzes of Cupids, and Hercules killing the Centaurs. The mirrors are singularly superb.

VIII. DINING ROOM.

It is well adapted for its destination, being

ing large, lofty, and commodiously situated. The ceiling is richly stuccoed, and the sides are wainscotted in large pannels, painted white. The chimney-piece is peculiarly handsome: it supports an elegant clock, mounted on an elephant in bronze, and crowned with an American Indian.

The productions of the pencil are:

I. 1. Cattle and Figures, in a very capital stile, by Castiglione;—a Bacchanalian Piece, by Vandyke.

II. 1. Lot and his Daughters, very fine, by Reubens, a present from the Emperor of Germany;—Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I. by Vandyke;—Venus and Adonis, by Reubens, another present from the Emperor.

III. The present DUKE, DUCHESS, and SIX CHILDREN—Ladies Caroline, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Anne;—the Marquis of Blandford, and Lord Henry: the two youngest LORD FRANCIS and LADY AMELIA, were born since this very capital picture (which cost seven hundred guineas) was painted, by Sir Joshua Reynolds. This eminent artist is supposed to have

have vied with Vandyke in his celebrated family piece at Wilton house, and to have excelled him, as far as grouping and character are concerned.—The Rape of Europa, by Paul Veronese.

On the pannels near the windows, at each end, are three small Landscapes, by Wootton.

IX. SALOON.

This noble and spacious apartment is highly finished, and richly decorated: it is lined in the lower part with marble in the Italian taste, and its four door-cases are entirely composed of the same beautiful and durable material. Over each door, which face the four quarters, are the arms of the first duke. Above the marble basement are six compartments, in which different nations of the world are depicted in their characteristic dresses and expressions, by La Guerre. These, however, are rather caricatures than natural delineations: they are shewn in the following manner, and said to represent,

I. The

I. The Painter,—French—English *, and Scotch.

II. Spaniards.

III. Moors and Negroes.

IV. Chinese and Tartars.

V. Turks.

VI. Dutch and Swedes.

The ceiling is the height of the building, and executed by the same artist with peculiar felicity both in design and performance. It emblematically represents JOHN DUKE of MARLBOROUGH in the career of victory, arrested by the hand of PEACE, while Time reminds him of the rapidity of his own flight.

Over the first chimney stands an antique bust of a Roman Consul;—and at the same end of the room, a marble slab with a Sleeping Venus.

Over the second chimney is an antique bust of Caracalla;—and on another marble slab, Cleopatra and the Asp.

* The Portrait of the Englishman is believed to represent Dean Jones, Chaplain to Sarah Duchess of Marlborough.

X. GREEN DRAWING ROOM.

It is hung with tapestry, representing, in vivid colours, some of the military exploits of John Duke of Marlborough.

I. Battle of Dunnewert.

II. Battle of Lisle, on the right of the chimney;—Siege of Lisle on the left. The French Spy is very expressively delineated.

III. Battle of Malplaquet. The eager attention of the person receiving orders is admirably drawn.

Over the first door is a charming portrait of a young Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, by Barrocio;—over the opposite door, a very masterly painting of Meleager and Atalanta, by Reubens.

On a pannel near the window at entrance, is the Adoration of the Shepherds, by Lucca Giordano.

A Madona and Child, by Nicholas Poussin.

Figures encircled with a wreath of flowers, by Rottenhammer.

On

On the opposite pannel.

The Offering of the Magi, by Lucca Giordano.

A Holy Family, by Nich. Poussin.

Figures encircled with a wreath of flowers, by Rottenhammer.

A most beautiful and curious Clock on a new construction, by Vulliamy, stands on the chimney-piece. A Serpent bending down its head from the top of a small urn, round which the hours are arranged, points out the time with its sting; and on the same urn, an elegant figure of CONTEMPLATION leaning, gives the whole a singular and rather monumental air. On each side are Boys Gambols in bronze.

Above is a highly finished and inexpressibly attractive picture of her Grace the DUCHESS of Marlborough, in an elegant white dress, by Romney.

On the marble slabs under the windows are bronzes of Fame and Mercury mounted on Pegasi.

The curtains, sophas, and other furniture, are deep green damask.

XI. STATE

XI. STATE DRAWING ROOM.

This apartment has been recently decorated, and furnished with the utmost magnificence. The ceiling is elegant;—the cornice richly gilt;—and the bordure round the room is in a corresponding stile. The mirrors are almost unrivalled in the superlative elegance of their frames—the magnitude of their plates is likewise very considerable.

The chimney is of the whitest marble: it is adorned with a small central urn, supported by two griffins; these, likewise, are part of the embellishments of the glasses: they belong to the family arms. The marble slabs are proportionate to the splendor of the rest. A highly finished cabinet at the lower end supports a rich lustre. The curtains and furniture are white damask.

One of the principal ornaments, however, of the room, is a most superb picture of his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, in his garter robes, by Romney: it is placed over the chimney. From this beautiful painting, Jones has executed a very happy mezzotinto:

mezzotinto: another of the Duchess from Romney's Painting has likewise been finished by the same artist.

The tapestry is a continuation of the first Duke's atchievements.

I. and II. The March to Bouchain.

II. and III. The Siege of Bouchain. In this piece, Lord Cadogan's Dog, which attended his master through the wars, and returned safe, makes a conspicuous figure.

Over the first door is a Fruit Piece, by Lucca Giordano.

Over the opposite door, St. Laurence distributing the ornaments of the altar, by Il Prete Genoese.

XII. STATE BED-CHAMBER.

In a palace there must be apartments for pomp as well as for utility; this is one of the former, and very splendid of the kind. The furniture and hangings are rich blue damask, interlaced with gold. The bed-posts are elegantly fluted, and covered with burnished gold: their extremities adorned with military emblems. The top

rises

rises into a dome, surmounted with a ducal coronet; at the head are the family arms.

The chimney-piece is decorated with bronzes of Hercules killing the Centaur, and the Hydra;—betweeen these is a bust of Diana;—over it is a capital picture, by Lucca Giordano, representing Seneca bleeding to death, while with philosophic composure he dictates to his amanuensis.

On a pannel to the right is a fine portrait of Eward VI. by Holbein.

A view of Architecture, by Panini.

The burning of Troy, by old Frank.

Over each door is a piece of still life, by Maltese.

From this stately suit of rooms, where the profusion of splendid objects is apt to dazzle the organs of sight, the eye is both charmed and relieved on entering.

XIII. THE LIBRARY.

This very spacious apartment, which occupies the entire west front, is two hundred feet long, and thirty-one feet nine inches wide in the centre.

It

It is impossible to conceive any thing more superb than the solid columns of marble, which support a rich entablature, the Doric pilasters of the same, the surrounding basement of black marble, and the stuccoed compartments of the lofty vaulted ceiling, which open a fine field for the pencil of the first master.

This noble room was originally intended as a gallery for paintings; but has since been furnished with the grand SUNDERLAND collection of books, comprising upwards of twenty thousand volumes, in various languages, arts, and sciences; all arranged in commodious cases with latticed doors, on the east side through its whole extent, and the two ends.

At the upper end of the library stands a highly finished white marble statue of QUEEN ANNE, in her coronation robes, by Risbrack; on the pedestal is this inscription:

TO THE MEMORY OF QUEEN ANNE!
UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES
JOHN DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH
CONQUERED,
AND TO WHOSE MUNIFICENCE
HE AND HIS POSTERITY
WITH GRATITUDE
OWE THE POSSESSION OF BLENHEIM.
A. D. MDCCXXVI.

In a recess on the west side, is an antique statue, inscribed JULIA DOMNA;—and lower down, another of DIANA and DOG, both on mohagany therms.

At the lower end is a bust of ALEXANDER the Great; a fine specimen of Grecian sculpture, in good preservation, dug out of the ruins of Herculaneum; and supported by an elegant modern therm.

Over the book-cases on the east side are the subsequent paintings and sculptures:

Lord Godolphin.

Duke of Montague.

Above the first chimney, a bust of Charles Earl of Sunderland, the collector of the books:—beneath, a sea piece of Jonah and the Whale, after Poussin:—on the chimney, a bust of the Emperor Adrian.

Countess of Sunderland.

Countess of Bridgwater.

Countess Cowper.

Hon. John Spencer.

Over the grand marble door-case that communicates with the hall, a bust of Milo Crotonensis.

Elizabeth Duchess of Marlborough.

Charles Duke of Marlborough.

Sarah

Sarah Duchess of Marlborough.

John Duke of Marlborough.

Over the second chimney, a Girl's Head, antique.—A Landscape, after Poussin; above, a bust of Charles Duke of Marlborough, by Rysbrack.

Queen Anne.

King William.

From the noble bow-windows on the west, is an elysian prospect of the beautiful swelling descent to the lake, and of the pendent grove on the opposite hill. Indeed every apartment has its appropriate beauties, both internal and external: the eye of taste will recognize many which the brevity of our plan prevented us from noting; to the more cursory observer this description will prove an useful monitor. One striking ornament, however, we have neglected to remark: the mahogany doors throughout this whole suit are splendidly finished, and are worthy of the apartments to which they conduct.

XIV. CHAPEL.

From the library we proceed along a piazza, with arcades below, to the Chapel,

 situated

situated in the western wing of the palace. The coup d'œil on entering is extremely grand, and the impression such as corresponds with the place. The stile of painting, and the degree of light, are both peculiarly happy: the large compartments of sober grey are finely relieved by the surrounding white; and the shade of foliage that partially darkens the windows, diffuses an air of composed solemnity, unmixed with gloom, unaccompanied with melancholy.

The chief ornament, however, is a stately MONUMENT in various marble, to the memory of the first Duke and Duchess, by Rysbrack. They are represented with their two Sons who died young, as supported by FAME and HISTORY: these are colossal figures, and being most prominent, are the most striking in the group. The pen of HISTORY seems to have traced this inscription on a tablet, which she holds in the other hand:

TO THE MEMORY
OF JOHN DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH AND
HIS TWO SONS
HIS DUCHESS HAS ERECTED
THIS MONUMENT
IN THE YEAR OF CHRIST, MDCCXXXIII.

Beneath, is the taking of Marshal Tallard, in basso relievo. Under this is the family vault.

The altar-piece represents our Saviour taking down from the Cross, by Jordaens of Antwerp.

The gallery for the family is splendidly hung with crimson velvet, fringed with gold. The cushions are corresponding. Over the chimney is a curious painting on black marble, by Alessandro Veronese.

TITIAN ROOM.

This apartment adjoins the THEATRE near the entrance of the Gardens, and is ornamented with a superb collection of paintings by TITIAN; a magnificent present from Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, to John Duke of Marlborough.

These capital performances of this celebrated master are now first displayed, for the sake of amateurs in the painting art. They consist of the following series:

I. MARS and VENUS.

II. CUPID and PSYCHE.

III. APOLLO and DAPHNE.
IV. PLUTO and PROSERPINE.
V. HERCULES and DEJANIRA.
VI. VULCAN and CERES.
VII. BACCHUS and ARIADNE.
VIII. JUPITER, JUNO, and Io.
IX. NEPTUNE and AMPHITRITE.

CHINA GALLERY *.

THIS elegant fabric, erected purposely for the reception of the superb collection now deposited here, stands close to the HOME LODGE, and is separated from the Park by iron palisadoes.

It was fitted up in the year 1796; and presents an additional attraction to the visitors of Blenheim, who delight in the antique, and curious specimens of the porcelain manufacture.

But it is not the connoisseur only who will be gratified by this display;—no eye of taste can fail to receive satisfaction from the sight of this splendid collection, nor will the arrangement pass unregarded by the most superficial observer.

The gallery, whose external figure re-

* This collection was formed by Mr. Spalding, and presented by him as an appendant to Blenheim, on condition that the care and exhibition of it should remain under his sole direction for the term of his natural life, and that it should for ever be annexed as an heir-loom to the Marlborough Family; unless the Duke chose to give it to some University, publick Museum, or Corporation.

presents a cross, is divided into five compartments.

The two rooms at each end are fitted up in an octagonal form, and lighted from the top, with the porcelain regularly arranged on slight pilasters, or fancifully suspended by brass hooks against the walls. The centre room, which occupies the transverse of the cross, is circular, and has a light in the form of a dome in the middle, and a smaller one on each side. This apartment is particularly magnificent. Round the walls are ten pannels and twelve pilasters, filled with choice specimens; and at a proper distance in the area, are eight pilasters and six open stands, with a pyramidal pagoda in the centre, supporting many pieces of singular value or beauty.

The whole gallery may be seen at the first entry; and, from the reflected light, the distribution of parts, and the splendor of the materials, which are here displayed to the greatest advantage, it may not inaptly be compared to the fanciful descriptions of enchanted palaces in poesy and romance.

This

This assemblage of ancient porcelain consists of an immense quantity of both useful and ornamental articles, in every species of that elegant manufacture, from the earliest ages till the art is said to have been lost. Some specimens exhibit its infant state, which, according to the Abbé Raynal, in his History of the Indies, may be reasonably supposed to be three thousand years ago. The remote antiquity of these may be inferred from the rudeness of the designs, and the imperfect crackled appearance of the baking. It is long before art can be brought to perfection. To glaze and bake in the high stile of many pieces in this collection, must require reiterated attempts, and the experience of years—perhaps of ages.

Among other varieties are many of the choicest pieces of the old blue, and white, and pale japan brown edge, so much esteemed by the curious. Likewise a numerous assortment of those very scarce and valuable sorts, the antique bleu celeste, and deep purple.

It is impossible to enter into a minute description of articles so various and extensive; but we cannot refrain from particularizing a few, and enumerating the principal sources from which they were drawn, by the ingenious and indefatigable Collector.

Among many other pieces deserving attention, are a pair of small bottles, once the property of Queen Anne—A large japan tea-pot, a present from Louis XIV. to the Duke of Richelieu—Two smaller ones from the Collection of the Duke of Orleans, father to Egalité—Some pieces from the late Princess Amelia's Cabinet—Many from the Portland Museum, and from the celebrated collection of the Duke d'Aumont at Paris—A singular piece from the Duke of Argyle's curiosities in the former reign—Several articles from the late Duchess of Kingston's—from Selima, Countess of Huntingdon's—from M. Calonne's—and M. Beaumarchais' Collections. Five ornamental pieces, presented by a Nabob to a Governor of Bengal in the

the reign of William III. possess uncommon beauty. A large white tea-pot, once in the possession of Oliver Cromwell, will be deemed a curiosity—Two pieces of jasper China, somewhat resembling shells, are remarkably beautiful and rare, as are several of that scarce sort, called honey-comb. It should also be observed, that some specimens are unique in their kind.

A collateral room adjoining the entrance to the gallery is filled with scarce and elegant specimens of Roman and old earthen ware, too numerous to mention. A delf jar of the latter kind was evidently fabricated long before the Dutch threw off the Spanish yoke, as appears from the dress of the figures—But one of the most singular curiosities, is a small piece representing a fish, which was brought from Athens, and is supposed to be coeval with that celebrated republic.

In this apartment, likewise, is a small select collection of the finest old black and gold wooden japan ;—and a numerous and beautiful assortment of old copper enamels of the black and white kind, and

also in various colours, on subjects both sacred and profane.

These slight notices may suffice to shew the value and extent of this collection. The curious, and real amateurs will satisfy themselves as to its peculiar merits.

GARDENS.

THE gardens, or pleasure grounds, occupy an area of two hundred acres and upwards. On part of the north, and the east side, they are surrounded by a sunk fence, which, without breaking the grandeur of the scene, serves to separate the parts that compose it. On the west side they make a bold descent to the lake, which falling from a lofty precipice at the south-west angle, formed likewise the southern boundary, before the recent additions of a considerable portion of the adjoining vale, and of the face of the opposite hill. Nature, indeed, seems to have placed this fine chain, which describes the figure of a bow on the west and south of the river, as the only regular termination of the pleasure grounds, and the line of demarcation between them and the park. The lofty umbrageous trees which cover its side and brow form a noble back ground,

and give an unity and finish to the scene. The features of the vale through which the river winds, from the cascade as far as the new bridge, entirely correspond with the rest of the picture. Art might heighten them, but Nature could not have been more propitious: they invite embellishment from the facility with which it might be applied. Or may it not be an effect of the justest taste, to render the transition from the more ornamental stile of the garden to the first shades of the ruder majesty of the park so very imperceptible, that the eye at a small distance cannot determine where the one commences and the other ends? In animate nature, the close alliance between the last genus of one class and the first of another has been ever considered as an instance of beauteous design and harmonious connection; and why may not the same hold good in inanimate objects? The just gradation of tints, and the easy blending of colours, are indisputably requisite to the composition of a perfect whole!

The usual entrance into the gardens is a little

a little to the left of the eastern gate of Blenheim, the usual approach. The EAST FRONT first salutes the view: before it spreads a cheerful lawn of an oblong form, extending a considerable way into the park; at first fringed with little clumps of evergreens, encircled and interspersed with flowers and deciduous shrubs: then broken by a few scattered trees, which rising on different sides of the boundary effectually conceal it; and afterwards lined by stately trees, that throw a finely chequered shade on the verdant sward below, and ranging in irregular pomp, preclude stiffness from mingling with beauty.

A walk of pebbly gravel of the most beautiful texture and regularity (which however prevails in the pleasure-grounds, and blends utility with ornament) winding to the east between rising plantations and clumps of trees and shrubs in various shape, at intervals is opened to highly embellished lawn; and soon taking an easy bend to the south, conducts to a TEMPLE, charged with the following elegant and

loyal

loyal inscription on a highly polished marble tablet:

DEO MAXIMO CONSERVATORI,
ER PROVIDENTIÆ DIVINÆ:
OB RECUPERATAM GEORGII TERTII,
REGIS OPTIMI, PIENTISSIMI SALUTEM,
HOC MARMOR
GEORGIUS DUX MARLBURIENSIS
EXPLETO DESIDERIO, VOTIQUE COMPOS,
IN ALIQUOD GRATI ANIMI TESTIMONIUM,
LÆTUS, LUBENSQUE DEDICAVIT.
ANNO SALUTIS HUMANÆ
MDCCLXXXIX.

Over the tablet is a beautiful medallion of his Majesty. This structure is adorned with Corinthian capitals. It emerges from a small thicket, which backs it and determines its site, and without imposing the idea of solitude renders it sufficiently sequestered. Before we reach this temple, the Triumphal Arch and Woodstock Tower are seen in pleasing perspective. From hence, the scene gradually changes. Intead of embellished lawn, we become embosomed in trees of venerable majesty. The park and gardens seem to unite, or their distinction is lost. The trimness of the walk, and the occasional sight of evergreens, alone discriminate the latter.

The

The parts unite,
And strength of shade contends with strength of light.

Open grove at an agreeable distance on each side continues for a considerable space. The whole is a delightful Home-walk, sheltered by the winding of its direction from every blast: possessing sufficient variety in every part, with an aspect continually improving.

From this pleasing route, however, we are drawn aside to the contemplation of the FLOWER GARDEN. A diverticle from the principle walk, near an ornamental tripod, inclines to a thick grove on the right, in which this elysian spot is placed. In our progress, the trees form an embowering shade,—as we enter,—they range in amphitheatric pride, and present a reclining face of foliage from the ground to a vast height above. The sudden burst of so much beauty strikes the eye: the musick of the spray delights the ear;—the fragrance recreates the other senses: images of tranquil joy fix their fairest impressions on the mind; and if they cannot efface

efface the remembrance of ills, they soothe it into resignation.

> See waving woods their aged arms display,
> And quivering sun-beams shed a partial day:
> Long vistas shooting from the wondering eyes,
> And bloom perennial pour unnumbered dyes!
> See flower-crown'd FLORA spread her lucid train,
> And give to BEAUTY all the smiling plain;
> While sylvan PAN, amid the shady trees,
> Joins in the concert with the swelling breeze.

This wilderness of sweets, which occupies about an acre, is copied from the design of Madame Pompadour, as displayed in the gardens of VERSAILLES. The outline is elegant; the execution charming; the accompaniments are judicious.

In the centre of variously arranged bouquets, which the bosom of the earth supports, is an Obelisk of porphyry, surrounded with four white marble vases, filled with annual flowers; on the north is a neat Temple, properly dedicated to FLORA; and, during the summer months, every interstice left by the trunks of the surrounding grove is replenished with oranges, lemons, and other exotic trees, shrubs, and plants of the greatest deli-

cacy and the richest odour, which ranking in natural progression before the permanent vegetative tribes, seem also the denizens of the spot.

There are different outlets through the grove: but to proceed in the regular tour, we take that near the south-east angle; and, after being embosomed in trees for a few paces, the scene opens to the left, but soon shuts with aggravated gloom. The trees become so thick and umbrageous, that the meridian sun only plays on their tops, or permeates an accidental break. The sweet smelling lime, the dark chesnut, and the airy beech, with evergreens below, bear the chief proportion here. All is still—all is solemn. The contrast with the flower garden is very striking, with the view that soon opens extremely captivating.

The Palladian gate, or entrance into the KITCHEN GARDENS, appears on the east; and the eye darts over a cheerful landscape to the south. On this side the walls of the kitchen gardens, which are fourteen feet high, are concealed by irregular plantations

tations of laurels and other shrubs, thinly scattered with forest trees. From the gate we trace their vast extent, clothed with the choicest fruit trees; we behold an area of eight acres, while four more remain unseen, furnished with every article of culinary use, or of elegance in the dessert, and replete with every requisite appendage for bringing it to perfection. The conservatory occupies an angle fronting the south.

Falling into the Home-walk at this place, the deviation from which has been previously mentioned, we soon enter the SHEEP-WALK, which is half a mile in length, and through its whole extent abounding with rural imagery. Frequently covered with a flock of more than a thousand sheep, all of the most beautiful and valuable, and some of the most curious kinds, this space, though possessing features of characteristic negligence, is not less rich, or less animated than the most favourite spots in the garden.

The open grove winds away to the right, and on this hand we catch a glimpse of the south front of the Palace, which is

thrown

thrown into various perspective as we advance. In other directions we enjoy a picturesque view of Beckley Hill, just peeping over the intervening heights; of Witham's lofty woods rising to the summit of Botley, where the trees range in solitary state; and through the long perspective of a rich champaign, in which ENSHAM Tower forms a very conspicuous object when illumined with a morning sun, the distant WHITE HORSE Hills are seen to elevate themselves into a background. Nor are remote pictures alone attractive at this hour: the deep shade that darkens the neighbouring village of BLADON, is finely contrasted with the level beams that glance on the water below. At every season of the day, indeed, some new beauty is developed, or the scenes are thrown into a different perspective by the aid of light and shade. The evening sun is not less propitious than the morning, for giving a brilliant effect to objects in this perambulation.

Proceeding, in one place the NEW BRIDGE appears broke and ruinous by the

fall of a tree that overhangs the bank; in another it shews its arches entire, and even the lower visible reach of water is seen sparkling through its ballustrades: farther, the centre arch alone is perceptible; and sometimes the whole is lost. Such is the effect of grouping and combining! The lawn is sprinkled with beautiful groups of trees: the majestic oak with pendent inclination to the stream is the frequent ornament to the slope.

About the middle of this walk, the top of HANDBOROUGH Spire, though more than three miles off, appears emerging from the bosom of the deep wood beyond the lake; and close on the right is seen the SHEPHERD'S COT, a little thatched edifice, composed of the trunks of trees fancifully arranged, backed by a clump, and shaded by horse-chesnuts in front.

Near this spot we may pause to contemplate the beauties which the changing scene displays. Nothing can be more picturesque than BLADON when gilded with an evening sun: the antique low tower, and here and there the end of a building,

glow

glow with the crimson of his beams, or the window, partially shaded by intervening trees, reflects them like living fire. CLAUDE would have caught the tints with rapture; he would have combined the objects into a picture; and on its effect he might have rested the immortality of his fame.

A little beyond the Shepherd's Cot is the first opening of the CASCADE; and for some space it forms a principal attraction. The water seems to flow out of the deep wood that bounds the head; its course is totally hid by the bend, by the figure of the banks, and the effect of plantation. Every step we descend towards the cascade the embellishments thicken, the scene becomes more illustrious. Groups of acacia, cedar, poplar, chesnut, and beech, decorate the declivity down to the river; and beyond it, at a proportionate distance, the back-ground, as far as the commencement of the new garden, is adorned with a profusion of hawthorns, surmounted by noble pendent trees, which, stretching round

round as far as the eye can reach, terminate in the near horizon.

But before we sink into the vale, it will not be unpleasing to take a retrospective view of the landscape we are leaving behind. The lofty Spire of KIDLINGTON seems to belong to the park; the distant hills, formerly observed, are cast into different perspective; and a new and wider range is displayed, farther than natural vision can distinguish objects, and till the blue hills of BUCKINGHAMSHIRE close with the bounding sky. Among these ASHRIDGE, the seat of the Duke of Bridgwater, may be ascertained in a clear day.

The obelisk of the FOUNTAIN soon peeps between a little woody island and the cascade; and the grand RIVER, which a few paces before was invisible, bursts at once on the eye in a broad sheet, without apparent continuity or connection. Before we reach the termination of the sheep-walk, we lose the cascade on the left; to it, however, we at last descend between clumps and groups of the most luxuriant

and

and delicate trees of various climes, intermixed with flowers and shrubs of the utmost fragrance and beauty. The ground, which at first is highest on the left, soon assumes a determined superiority on the right. It is thrown into masses with a masterly hand; it has received every embellishment that refined taste can confer on natural beauty; and we enjoy the touch of art without waking the idea that revolts at its flaunting display.

> Here various trees compose a chequer'd scene,
> Glowing in gay diversities of green;
> There the full stream thro' intermingling glades,
> Shines a broad lake, or falls in loud cascades.

In the vicinity of the cascade, whose sides are finely shaded, the water is quite lost above. Even from the bridge that fronts it at fifty feet distance, we only see the fall without tracing the supply. The charming reach below appears in its most varied features from this bridge, which connects the gardens; and when the full stream devolves from the rocky barrier, and bounds from one point to another in foamy pride with deafening roar,

roar, nothing can be more grateful to a contemplative mind than such a scene and such a situation.

> Down the steep fall devolve the foaming tides,
> Unfading verdure clothes th' aspiring sides.
> Emblem of life! where waves on waves arise,
> While HOPE looks up, and views serener skies;
> Where still the troublous sea incessant roars,
> And still Hope flatters, as we eye the shores.

The NEW GARDEN, which we now enter, though of no very great extent, contains many beauties peculiar to itself, many views of magnificent and appropriate scenery. Following the course of the river on the left, we soon reach NEWFOUND WELL, a mineral spring of the chalybeate kind, said to possess very active virtues. In the front of a dark clump rises a pedestal supporting an urn, and from an aperture in the former gushes the spring; and being received into an antique bason, charged with numerous fancy figures, in alto relievo, much injured, flows out near the top by the mouths of two lions, and quickly mixes with the river. Again we have a view of the new bridge, and of a serpentine reach of water, embracing the

the island, and gliding on with glassy smoothness. The FOUNTAIN next attracts our notice.

> There River-Gods reclin'd at ease explore
> A scene more lovely than their native shore;
> Confess HESPERIA boasts no charms can vie
> With the bright landscapes that around them lie.

It is situated at the bottom of the hill, and forms an object not unworthy of its place and destination. In the centre of an elegant capacious bason, where dolphins seem to sport, stands the base, formed of a species of porous stone, permeable by the water, and thrown together in rude pomp, with a cavern from east to west, from which seem to issue, in a drinking attitude, a lion and a sea-horse, the attributes of Europe and Africa.

On the four extremities of the rock, which supports the obelisk, are four River-Gods, sculptured in white marble, with a delicacy and expression not to be surpassed. These are intended to represent the DANUBE, the NILE, the LA PLATA, and the GANGES, the four principal rivers of the different quarters of the globe. The

DANUBE rests his right leg on an oar*—The NILE veils his head with classical propriety—The American River-God lifts up his left hand and eyes in surprise, as if first made known to the rest of the world—The ASIATIC River-God, with a placid look, stretches out his hand to a serpent crawling and a shell. This last seems to be a different design from the original, where the GANGES is represented as recumbent, crowned with sedge, and a rudder between his legs, with the palm-tree behind.

The following arms appear on one side of the base of the obelisk;—under a coronet in a bordure of lions and castles per saltier for Castile and Leon, two baskets and five. On the opposite side, in a bordure of saltiers, under a coronet, two wolves, with lambs in their mouths.

Above, on the square pedestal of the obelisk, which is of white marble, is the subsequent inscription in four different

* In the Vatican at Rome is an ancient sculpture of the TIBER in the same attitude. May not Bernini have intended that river instead of the Danube?

languages,

languages, Latin, Greek, Italian, and Spanish.

AD INNOCENTIUM XI. SUMMUM PONTIFICEM.
PRO. CAROLO. II. HISPANIARUM REGE
EXCELC: D. D. GASPAR: DE. HARO, ET
GUZMAN.
MURCHIO. DE. CARPIO. ET HELICHEO ORATOR.
AD TYPUM MOLIS. IN AGONALI FORO ERECTÆ.
AB EQUITE. BERNINO. OPUS. HOC. EXTRUI.
JUSSIT, EODEM. DIRIGENTE. QUI. INTERIM.
DUM PERFICERETUR. DEFUNCTUS.
HOC: POSTHUMO. PARTU: INEXHAUSTAM.
MENTIS. FOECUNDITATEM CLAUSIT.
ANNO D: M: DC: LXXXI.

This fine piece of sculpture, the last work of BERNINI, and a copy from the magnificent fountain in the Piazza Navona at Rome, was a present from the Spanish ambassador at the Papal court to the first Duke of Marlborough. It has only been recently erected; and during the many years it lay neglected, it was much damaged, and part of its characteristic appendages and adjuncts lost. Still, however, it bears a close resemblance to the noble original; proves an ornament to the gardens and the admiration of spectators.

From the fountain the path meanders up hill. The left is open to the charming vale through which the river glides: the

right is occasionally shaded by groups of trees. Almost every step presents a new scene; the transitions are sudden, but never harsh: even the strong contrast between the elegant sculpture we have just left, and the wild rock seats that occupy the brow, gives an additional impression to each. Above these is a noble view into the park: the HIGH LODGE, with its antique battlements amidst an amphitheatre of venerable trees, is a striking object in the landscape. From this spot we wind to the right, and fresh beauties again arrest the attention. To paint every change of scenery that presents itself in the space of an hundred yards would be impossible: the impression can only be conveyed by the eye;—the happiest description would fail. At one point we have a glimpse of the river; at another perhaps it is lost; the turrets of the Palace just emerge; an expanse of water with a forest line of wood draws the view; and, at a few paces distance, the Palace, the river, the two principal bridges, and the fine terrace

on

on the west of the gardens, all burst with irresistible beauty and attraction. At this spot the sublime predominates in a very high degree; and frigid indeed must that taste be, which will not feel and confess the energy of the scene. When the rising sun throws its horizontal rays on the gilded orbs of Blenheim, the tops of the trees catch his radiance, and the withdrawing shade lightly floats on the surface of the lake; nature does not furnish a picture of more brilliancy than this. A little farther, and the intervening groups allow only glimpses;—again the prospect opens, the park displays its sylvan honours on the north, and on the east the Chiltern hills bound the sight. At the utmost extent of vision is WINCHENDON, formerly the seat of the Duke of Wharton, now the property of his Grace of Marlborough. There is something grand in the idea: the vast space between is swallowed up: and fancy combining the distant domains in the same landscape, gives a sanction and a solution to the magnificence around.

On the right, as we turn down towards the iron-bridge, stands l'ARROTINO, or, as it is usually called, the LISTENING SLAVE, a fine cast in bronze from the antique, by BENZI. Descending to the river, from distant views the transition becomes instantaneous to near ones. The water is seen flowing round to the cascade: the bank on the right is abrupt and rocky, chiefly planted with sumach; on the left, it is adorned with the fairest rising plantations, which in a short time will render the spot more characteristically romantic.

On the Blenheim side of the iron-bridge the cascade and its accompaniments are wholly lost; the former can only be traced by its murmurs and its dashing. The walk now runs along the left of the upper river: the lower is scarcely perceptible. Even the inferior path, by which we descend from the sheep-walk to the cascade, though only a few yards below, is rendered entirely distinct, by the figure of the ground, and the groups that adorn it. As we advance to the

the angle of the sheep-walk, the ground becomes gradually more elevated. Beyond the broad expanse of water on the left, a fine outline of pendent wood stretches along to an indeterminate length; on the other hand is highly decorated lawn. The TERRACE may be said to commence at this point; and its captivating charms are gradually developed as we proceed. From a moderate elevation above the level of the lake, it rises to a bold declivity, feathered down to the brink with majestic trees, interspersed with plantations of younger growth, grouped and arranged in the most enchanting style, while the wild forest that clothes the opposite bank is reflected in the crystal tide below. The lake is farther enlivened with various pleasure vessels, disposed in such a manner as may best adorn this illustrious scene. Behind is a delightful perspective of the back ground on the south-west; and the cascade glitters in all its grandeur.

As we approximate the level of the terrace, the shaft of Churchill's PILLAR appears in front above the surrounding

trees; by degrees it opens to its very base. The dark groves in the northern part of park begin to display themselves; and couched in the front of one, the celebrated BATH of Rosamond may be dimly discerned. The water too assumes a variety of figures; the outline becomes more indented; and a collateral branch of undefined extent, running up a deep vale from the principal stream, without appearing to derive its sole importance from it, has the pleasing effect of seeming to augment its current. DITCHLEY Woods form the horizon; these fall into the background of the scene, at a distance sufficient for greatness, and without any disjunction of parts.

Here we reach the temple of DIANA, which stands on a summit of the declivity.—We survey the landscape with rapture—we confess the *ne plus ultra* of picturesque embellishment. This temple indeed marks the happy spot where the assemblage of different attractions operate with singular advantage. All is great—all is executed on a scale of proportionate magnificence;

magnificence; and though every part of the gardens has peculiar charms, this terrace—this point in particular, as a home view combines more than all, and exhibits almost every different excellence in each.

The temple itself is a beautiful structure, designed by Sir William Chambers; and its situation corresponds with that on the east of the gardens. In the front are four pillars with Ionic capitals; and on the pediment is this dedication:

ΑΡΤΕΜΙΔΙ.
ΑΓΡΙΑΙ-ΙΑΔΙ.
ΟΡΕΣΤΙΑΔΙ.

"To the Ionian, rural, mountain-ranging Diana."

On the back within, is a central medallion, representing, in bass-relief, HIPPOLITUS offering a wreath of flowers to DIANA; and on two others united to this by a festoon, are the subsequent verses from the Hippolitus of EURIPIDES, with the annexed elegant English version.

Σοι τονδε πλεκτον στεφανον εξ ακηρατου
Λειμωνος. Ω Δεσποινα, κοσμησας φερω.
Ενθ' ουδε ποιμην αξιοι φερβειν βοτα,
Ουδ' ηλθε πω σιδηρος· αλλ' ακηρατον
Μελισσα λειμων' εαρινος διερχεται·
Ηως δε ποταμιαισι κηπευει δροσοις.

To

To thee, bright Goddess, these fair flowers I bring,
A chaplet woven from th' untainted mead,
Thy cool sequester'd haunt, where never yet
Shepherd approach'd; where the rude hind ne'er heav'd
Th' unhallow'd axe: nor voice nor sound is heard,
Save the low murmuring of the vernal bee.
The day-spring from above the dew distils
Genial and mild, from the pure stream exhal'd,
On every fragrant herb, and favourite flower.

Hurried on by the splendour of more capital objects, we forget to notice another cast in bronze of the ROMAN WRESTLERS, by BENZI. It stands on the right a little before we approach the temple, and well deserves attention as a just representation of the antique.

A short way beyond the temple we enjoy many brilliant scenes in the park; and turning round over the charming lawn before the south front of the Palace, finish the tour of the gardens with impressions of pleasure gradually raised to the highest, and permanently fixed by the splendor of the concluding scenery.

The intersecting walks generally retire from the sight, but are never wanting for necessary communication: they conduct

to

to the principal subordinate scenes; they occupy the happiest spaces. By following their direction we are sure of meeting with some object in our progress to compensate for the toil; some beauty is disclosed which would otherwise be lost; or scenes are thrown into perspective, or heightened by contrast, in a manner different from what we observed before.

The occasional recurrence also of the garden chair, the plain bench, or the circular seat round the trunk of some umbrageous tree, by presenting opportunities for rest, prevent the idea of lassitude. Thus, in our journey through life, it is not always the actual use of the accommodations we possess, that adds to our comfort; it is the reflection that we may command them in the hour of need, and that we have it in our power to gratify the want as soon as it is felt. But these are not simply objects of ornament or convenience; they generally point out scenes which repose may contemplate with delight, and fancy combine into picture.

Here a thousand beauties, originating from design, appear fortuitous to the eye. Though traversing a garden where taste has exhausted its skill, we incessantly indulge the idea of being only contemplating the natural charms of the country, and tracing delights of rich variety and unlimited extent.

In this tour, indeed, we have omitted many circumstances which in an inferior place would have claimed deserved regard. Here littleness is absorbed in grandeur, and prettiness in magnificence. This marks the prevailing character; and should it ever, in the minutest instance, be sacrificed to its opposite, Blenheim will lose that principal beauty—consistency, though it may borrow the fairest flowers from the garland of novelty. There is no danger, however, of this: while the same taste that has so ably planned, so nobly presides, *et longum sit*, this place will not only maintain its acknowledged superiority for highly embellished landscape, but rise still higher in the scale of public estimation.

Of

Of this there is an evident proof in the annually increasing number of visitors; and who that has seen Blenheim once, does not wish to see it again!

RIVER.

RIVER.*

THE River, which covers the whole extent of a spacious valley, bending in the happiest stile, and affording the most profuse variety of picturesque features in the sublime, the beautiful, and the tranquil, when viewed with its accompaniments, is indisputably the most superb piece of artificial water in this kingdom. It is chiefly supplied by the GLYME, which still, in a great measure, retains its original direction, its channel being expanded rather than altered; so favourable has Nature been to the operations of art!

* If the words river and lake are sometimes applied to the same thing, it is hoped the reader will not impute this to ignorance or error: the water at Blenheim partakes of the nature of both; it is a RIVER, because it has a progressive motion; it is also a LAKE, because it spreads far beyond its original channel. Thus uniting the distinguishing beauties and characteristics of each, it rises to the pre-eminence of sublimity in kind. It is proper however to remark, that it generally receives the name of the LAKE from its commencement to the grand bridge, and of the GREAT WATER down to the cascade.—The whole is stocked with abundance of fine fish, such as pike, perch, carp, &c. &c. Pikes have sometimes been caught here weighing nearly 30lbs.

It

It enters the park in the vale which separates Old from New Woodstock, flowing under a belt of rising plantations, and issuing to light by a bridge of seven arches, the minuteness and multiplicity of which have been thought to derogate from grandeur, though the whole is well adapted to give the idea of continuity. In other views, a thick grove, and beautiful groups of Lombardy poplars, and other trees that love the streams, by concealing the source promote the same desirable effect. The banks at first are low: on one side they soon become bold and winding; on the other, they have little elevation, but are happily varied.

The river quickly spreading to a great expanse, stretches towards QUEEN POOL*, where it forms a small creek, chiefly lost in trees; then taking a determined course, it seems to seek the opposite shore, in its progress flowing round Queen ELIZABETH'S ISLAND†, a most delightful spot,

* So called from Philippa, Queen of Edward III.

† This is part of the ancient causeway leading to the royal palace.

cloathed

cloathed with trees and shrubs of the utmost beauty and variety, which connect the groups on the banks; and soon becoming embayed on the left, it winds round to the grand bridge, narrowing as it advances to an adequate breadth.

From the bridge a most capital expanse of water again catches the eye; an expanse unrivalled by the finest English river*, unmixed with the sea; and which, washing the remote banks, varies with their direction; makes a long diversion up a vale that forms a right angle with its bed, and affords the representation of a collateral stream; then rolling a seemingly enlarged volume, it winds round, and washes the foot of the declivity, on which part of the gardens lie; and on the other side it is bounded by a hill, feathered down with a noble wood to the water's edge, and frequently reflected on its surface.

* Brown, who superintended the early improvements here, in his usual consequential manner, has been heard to boast, "That the Thames would never forgive him for what he had done at Blenheim. Had he lived to the present time, he would have been sensible how much his most finished labours may be surpassed.

Preserving

Preserving one general unvarying direction for a considerable length, it gradually narrows; and viewed from the grand bridge appears land-locked and embayed. Several pleasure vessels of various construction riding at anchor, swans sailing in conscious pride, and other aquatic fowl indigenous as well as exotic, exercising their native propensities, unite to enliven the watery scene. When tranquil, the reflected and inverted images in the stream present a picture, which fancy contemplates with mild delight; when agitated with winds, its rippling bosom and wavy dash are lively emblems of the sea, to which it then bears some resemblance.

At the point where it appears embayed, it passes under a light iron bridge, simple and unadorned, and characteristic of its destination; and making a pretty sudden bend, it tumbles down a barrier of massy rocks, with a force equal to its copiousness, and with a fall of eighteen feet. Above this cascade are an hundred and fifty acres of water: below it is a continuation of an hundred more.

Recovering

Recovering its level, it flows with a serpentine sweep through an expanded vale, embellished with a few groups of the most flourishing young plantation; and at an agreeable distance stretches another face of the hill already mentioned as a boundary, covered with trees whose pendency and age render them at once picturesque and venerable; but though in this reach the river admits an oval woody islet, its channel becomes now more contracted than before; and its stile partakes rather of the beautiful than the sublime. Reaching the new bridge, a very elegant structure, it inclines with the course of the vale, and touching near Bladon, makes a determined bend to the right. The banks on both sides at this point are swelling lawn with little clumps connected by single trees, disposed without the least shew of intention.

From hence the river takes a variety of charming turns, chiefly with a strong inclination to the right, doubling as it were on itself, and circumscribing the end of the hill which accompanies it the greatest

greatest part of its course. In one place, a fine sheet of water spreads before the eye, and invites progress by its apparent continuity; in another, the trees seem to embay it, and we advance a considerable way before we can detect the deception.

From the first determined sweep near Bladon, a gravel walk on the left follows the direction of the river. This walk is bounded on one side by a belt of thick plantation; on the other a few scattered trees range with the stream. Beyond the river we are charmed with all the diversity of pleasing scenery: a small grove first presents itself close to the verge of the tide; a few irregular trees next succeed; sometimes a clump planted at the termination of a reach, by advancing to the belt on the opposite shore, appears to landlock the stream; then again we are delighted with open lawn and diversified landscape. At last, the river precipitates itself down a steep casade, and at the same instant falls into the EVENLODE, which gliding in an opposite direction

through

through verdant meads, winds under the park to receive the tributary GLYME. The united rivers forming a woody island immediately after their junction, meander through a continuation of meads, and dispense beauty and fertility as they flow.

The effect occasioned by two rivers hastening to meet each other, and then bending almost at right angles with their former course, is as pleasing as it is singular and romantic. No aukward termination is here to be traced; no disgusting display of art to heighten the scene: taste unfolds the beauties of Nature with a delicate touch, and Art is only the handmaid to her charms.

So many circumstances lend their aid to embellish this spot and its vicinity, that we scruple not to pronounce it one of the most delightful in the precincts of Blenheim: but it retires from the view, and its unobtrusive charms are therefore seldom seen. While scenes less captivating force attention by a bold display, these, like modesty, shun the public eye, and are only visited by the discerning few. May

we

we not add, such is the fate of unassuming merit; its lovely qualities are only casually noticed, and the impression they make is often too evanescent to avail them.

To return—the water at Blenheim, as a very elegant writer* observes, "in size, "form, and stile, is equal to the majesty "of the scene; and is designed in the "spirit, is executed with the liberality "of the original donation, when this "residence of a mighty monarch was "bestowed by a great people, as a muni-"ficent reward on the hero who had "deserved best of his country."

* Wheatley on Modern Gardening.

PARK*

The PARK, which under the auspices of the present Duke has received every possible improvement,

Plann'd by his taste, and planted by his hand,

is one continued galaxy of charming prospects, and agreeably diversified scenes. Its circumference is upwards of twelve miles; its area about two thousand seven hundred acres, round which are the most enchanting rides, chiefly shaded towards the boundary with a deep belt of various trees, evergreens, and deciduous shrubs, whose mingled foliage exhibit the different gradations of tints from the most faint to the most obfuscated green; while others of corresponding figure and growth on the park side, sometimes range with the former, and sometimes breaking into groups, with large interstices between,

* That vast space which lies without the RIVER has received the appropriate appellation of the GREAT PARK; the portion which is in a great measure surrounded by it, of the LITTLE PARK.

relieve

relieve the tædium of continued uniformity, and open the most brilliant prospects. Indeed the effects of polished taste and sublime in design are no where more perceptible than in the boundless views which at intervals present themselves; the limits of the park being in general quite concealed; and the whole surrounding country, varied with hills, and vales, spires, towers, and villas, appearing as one wide extended landscape. In the internal part new improvements are continually adopting, and new plantations rising, wherever they can contribute to the beauty or the luxuriance of the scene.

—Hence the poor are cloath'd, the hungry fed,
Health to himself, and to his children bread
The labourer bears.———

During the vernal season the profusion of blossomed hawthorns, in all the wild luxuriance of nature, scattered among the forest trees, diffuse the most delightful fragrance, while they encrease the general effect; and even when stripped of their foliage,

foliage, they are not ungrateful to the eye, that is enamoured of vegetative beauty in its every aspect. The humble thorn aptly contrasts with the lofty tree, and though confined within narrow limits, like unaspiring poverty, is not less necessary than its type to fill up the interstices of space, and to complete the plan of creation.

In different places also we meet with venerable oaks, that have seen some centuries pass over their heads, and yet flourish in a green old age. It would be easy to point out some of extraordinary dimensions and beauty which are perfectly sound; while the fantastic forms and umbrageous tops of others, with their hearts quite decayed, read many a moral and impressive lesson, which the mind of sensibility may easily apply. Often is the heart of man corroded with care or broken by neglect, while the forced smile of joy, called up by honest pride, plays on the face; and externals indicate nothing but happiness, and vigour within. The GENEROUS SPIRIT, like the majestic king of the forest, towers

unbending

unbending to the last; and perhaps when the irresistible storms by which it has been long buffetted occasion its fall, the unavailing tear of regret may be shed too late, and the hand that might have been a stay, be extended in vain *.

The usual RIDE round the park for occasional visitors includes a circumference of rather more than three miles, describing a wide circle round the palace and gardens, which are casually and advantageously seen through glades in the progress, and exhibiting many magnificent pictures over the park and country round. This RIDE has ever been considered as the first of natural charms that

* On the evening of the 29th of November 1797, a freezing rain began to fall, and in the course of the night incrusted every tree, shrub, and blade of grass, to a thickness almost incredible. In consequence of this, many trees and an immense number of branches were brought to the ground. In Blenheim park, to which, and a small surrounding space, this phænomenon was confined, nearly one thousand loads of wood were destroyed. The very rooks had their wings frozen, and fell from their perches. Nothing could be more beautiful than the trees in their brilliant coats of mail. By candle light, every leaf of evergreens seemed to have a diamond pendent at its extremity.

BLENHEIM supplies, and as the co
d'œil and compendium of all the rest; a
as it may be taken in a carriage or o
horseback, it is neither accompanied wi
fatigue or delay. It may be taken too i
any weather, another considerable adva
tage.

To enumerate every beauty conspicuo
in this tour would be to delineate all th
is charming in natural objects; and i
some instances would occasion a repetitio
of circumstances already remarked. A d
tail must not therefore be expected. L
it however be observed, that at Blenhei
the *ferme ornée* is combined with th
magnificent park. In one quarter, the e
is delighted with the sight of wavi
corn, in another with green paddocks th
invite the scythe: here a building de
cated to agricultural purposes, or rais
for the accommodation of the necessa
officers, just peeps through the de
shade of surrounding trees; there t
team rattles down the slope abrupt. O
one side appears a herd of deer, on anoth

a flo

flock of sheep, and sometimes animals ative and foreign graze in social peace. All is a picture of rural life in its most greeable colours, in its happiest avocaions: it presents cheerful activity, or ranquil repose—Arcadian scenes divestd of fable, and real wealth without litter.

The PHEASANTRY, situated on a rising round near the lower cascade, is one of he most superb establishments of the kind in this country. The variety and beauty of these birds present an object hat cannot fail to please. But though ome of the more curious kinds are kept here, they stock the park and the adjoining woods in prodigious numbers.

Among the many captivating views which every spectator of taste will recognize in the tour of the PARK, those from he HIGH LODGE and the OBELISK may be particularized. The HIGH LODGE was once the residence of the witty, but immoral Wilmot Earl of Rochester, and the place where he died. Let those, who have copied

his profligacy, reflect on his remorse, and resolve to imitate his repentance! From hence the prospect is not only one of the most extensive, but also one of the most captivating in Great-Britain: it includes among a variety of other capital and picturesque objects, a beautiful view of the University of OXFORD.

> OXONIA's fanes, of every art the seat,
> Of every Muse the lov'd, the blest retreat.
> O may fair Science in these precincts smile,
> And shed her lustre o'er this happy isle:
> To guard the laws, religion's flame maintain,
> Still may worth issue from her fost'ring reign!

Viewed from the OBELISK or PILLAR at once the Palace, the River, and the Gardens are seen in their best perspective, and the idea of grandeur they excite will convert admiration into rapture. Nor will the OBELISK itself pass without observation: it is raised to the memory of the hero of modern times, compared with whose transcendent services the greatest exploits of other warriors sink into oblivion.

> Immortal Chief! of Albion's isle the pride,
> By martial deeds to greatest names ally'd:

Renown

Renown'd for valour, as for mercy lov'd,
The highest pitch of human bliss you prov'd;
Gain'd the fair meed without the conscious stain,
And wore the laurel, unalloy'd with pain.
Unlike those pests who fought for fame alone,
To slave a nation, or to mount a throne;
You drew the sword, the injur'd to defend,
To aid the helpless, and the proud to bend.
Be this your fame!—nor could the favouring Nine
Grace with a praise, more noble, more divine.

The statue of this great man, which crowns the column, is designed in a Roman dress: at his feet are two eagles: in the left hand is the general's baton; in the right, a figure of VICTORY elevated. On three sides of the pedestal are inscribed the Acts of the British Parliament in his favour, and the entail of his honours and estates on the descendants of his daughters, and issue failing in the eldest, Lady Godolphin, from the Countess of Sunderland the second daughter, they centre in the present illustrious family: on the side facing Blenheim, his character is thus delineated, and his exploits recorded, as is supposed, by the masterly pen of Lord Bolingbroke:

The

The Castle of BLENHEIM was founded by Queen ANNE,
In the fourth year of her Reign,
In the Year of the Christian Æra
One Thousand Seven Hundred and Five:
A Monument designed to perpetuate the Memory of the
Signal Victory
Obtained over the *French* and *Bavarians*,
Near the Village of BLENHEIM,
On the Banks of the *Danube*,
By JOHN Duke of MARLBOROUGH,
The Hero not only of his Nation, but of his Age:
Whose Glory was equal in the Council and in the Field;
Who by Wisdom, Justice, Candour, and Address,
Reconciled various, and even opposite Interests;
Acquired an Influence
Which no rank, no Authority can give,
Nor any Force, but that of superior Virtue:
Became the fixed important Centre,
Which united, in one common Cause,
The principal States of EUROPE;
Who, by military Knowledge, and irresistible Valour,
In a long Series of uninterrupted Triumphs,
Broke the Power of France,
When raised the highest, when exerted the most:
Rescued the Empire from Desolation;
Asserted, and confirmed the Liberties of EUROPE.

" PHILIP, a Grandson of the House of
" FRANCE, united to the Interest, di-
" rected by the Policy, supported by the
" Arms of that Crown, was placed on
" the Throne of Spain. King WILLIAM
" III. beheld this formidable Union of
" two Great, and once Rival Monarchies.

" At

At the end of a Life spent in defending the Liberties of EUROPE, He saw them in their greatest Danger. He provided for their security in the most effectual Manner. He took the Duke of Marlborough into his Service.

" Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
" To the States General of the United Provinces,

" The Duke contracted several Alliances, " before the Death of King William. He " confirmed and improved These, He con- " tracted others, after the Accession of " Queen ANNE; and re-united the Con- " federacy, which had been dissolved at " the End of a former War, in a stricter " and firmer League.

" Captain General and Commander in Chief
" Of the Forces of Great-Britain,

" The Duke led to the Field the Army of " the Allies. He took with surprising rapi- " dity VENLO, RUREMONDE, STE- " VENSWAERT, LIEGE. He extended " and secured the Frontiers of the Dutch. " The Enemies, whom he found insulting " at the Gates of NIMEGHEN, were " driven to seek for shelter behind their

" Lines. He forced BONNE, HUY, LIM-
" BOURG, in another Campaign. He
" opened the Communication of the
" RHINE, as well as the MAES. He
" added all the Country between these
" Rivers to his former Conquests.

" The Arms of FRANCE, favoured by
" the Defection of the Elector of BAVA-
" RIA, had penetrated into the Heart of
" the EMPIRE. This mighty Body lay
" exposed to immediate ruin. In that
" memorable Crisis, the Duke of MARL-
" BOROUGH led his Troops, with unex-
" ampled Celerity, Secrecy, Order, from
" the OCEAN to the DANUBE. He saw,
" He attacked, nor stopped, but to con-
" quer the Enemy. He forced the BAVA-
" RIANS, sustained by the FRENCH,
" in their strong Entrenchments at
" SCHELLENBERG. He passed the
" DANUBE. A second Royal Army,
" composed of the best Troops of
" FRANCE, was sent to reinforce the
" first. That of the Confederates was
" divided. With one Part of it the Siege
" of INGOLDSTADT was carried on:
" with the other, the Duke gave Battle

" to

" to the united Strength of FRANCE and
" BAVARIA. On the second day of
" August, one thousand seven hundred
" and four, He gained a more glorious
" Victory than the Histories of any Age
" can boast. The heaps of slain were
" dreadful Proofs of his Valour: A Mar-
" shall of FRANCE, whole Legions of
" FRENCH, his Prisoners, proclaimed
" his Mercy. BAVARIA was subdued,
" RATISBON, AUSBOURG, ULM,
" MEMINGHEN, all the Usurpations
" of the Enemy were restored. From
" the DANUBE the Duke turned his
" victorious Arms towards the RHINE,
" and the MOSELLE, LANDAU,
" TREVES, TRAERBACH were taken.
" In the Course of one Campaign the
" very Nature of the War was changed.
" The Invaders of other States were
" reduced to defend their own. The
" Frontier of FRANCE was exposed in
" its weakest Part to the Efforts of the
" Allies.

" That He might improve this Advan-
" tage, that He might push the Sum of

" Things to a speedy Decision, the Duke
" of MARLBOROUGH led his Troops
" early in the following Year once more
" to the MOSELLE. They whom He
" had saved a few months before, neg-
" lected to second him now. They who
" might have been His Companions in
" Conquest, refused to join him. When
" He saw the generous Designs He had
" formed frustrated by private Interest, by
" Pique, by Jealousy, He returned with
" Speed to the MAES. He returned,
" and Fortune and Victory returned with
" Him. LIEGE was relieved: HUY re-
" taken. The FRENCH, who had pressed
" the Army of the STATES GENERAL
" with superior Numbers, retired behind
" Intrenchments which they deemed im-
" pregnable. The Duke forced these
" Intrenchments, with inconsiderable loss,
" on the seventh Day of July, 1705. He
" defeated a great Part of the Army which
" defended them. The rest escaped by a
" precipitate Retreat. If Advantages pro-
" portionable to this Success were not
" immediately obtained, let the Failure
" be

" be ascribed to that Misfortune which
" attends most Confederacies, a Division
" of Opinions where one alone should
" judge, a Division of Powers where one
" alone should command. The Disap-
" pointment itself did Honour to the
" Duke. It became the Wonder of Man-
" kind, how he could do so much under
" those Restraints which had hindered
" him from doing more.

" Powers more absolute were given him
" afterwards. The Encrease of his Powers
" multiplied his Victories. At the opening
" of the next Campaign, when all his
" Army was not yet assembled, when it
" was hardly known that he had taken
" the Field, the Noise of his Triumphs
" was heard over EUROPE. On the
" twelfth day of May, one thousand seven
" hundred and six, he attacked the French
" at RAMELLIES. In the Space of
" two Hours their whole Army was put to
" Flight. The Vigour and Conduct with
" which he improved the success were
" equal to those with which he gained it.
" LOUVAIN, BRUSSELS, MALINES,

" LIERE, GHENT, OUDENARDE,
" ANTWERP, DAMME, BRUGES,
" COURTRAY surrendered. OSTEND
" MENIN, DENDERMOND, AETH,
" were taken. BRABANT and FLAN-
" DERS were recovered. Places which
" had resisted the greatest Generals for
" Months, for Years; Provinces disputed
" for Ages were the Conquests of a Sum-
" mer.

" Nor was the Duke content to triumph
" alone. Solicitous for the general Inte-
" rest, his Care extended to the remotest
" Scenes of the War. He chose to lessen
" his own Army, that he might enable the
" Leaders of other Armies to conquer.
" To this must be ascribed, that TURIN
" was relieved, the Duke of Savoy rein-
" stated, the FRENCH driven with Con-
" fusion out of ITALY.

" These Victories gave the Confederates
" an Opportunity of carrying the War
" on every side into the Dominions of
" FRANCE. But she continued to enjoy
" a Kind of peaceful Neutrality in GER-
" MANY. From ITALY, she was once
" alarmed,

" alarmed, and had no more to fear. The
" entire Reduction of this Power, whose
" Ambition had caused, whose Strength
" supported the War, seemed reserved to
" him alone, who had so triumphantly
" begun the glorious Work.

" The Barrier of FRANCE on the Side
" of the LOW COUNTRIES, had been
" forming for more than half a Century.
" What Art, Power, Expence could do,
" had been done, to render it impene-
" trable. Yet here she was most exposed:
" for here the Duke of MARLBO-
" ROUGH threatened to attack her.

" To cover what they had gained by
" Surprise, or had been yielded to them
" by Treachery, the FRENCH marched
" to the Banks of the SCHELDE. At
" their Head were the Princes of the
" Blood, and their most fortunate General
" the Duke of VENDOME. Thus com-
" manded, thus posted, they hoped to
" check the Victor in his Course. Vain
" were their Hopes. The Duke of
" MARLBOROUGH passed the River
" in their Sight. He defeated their whole
" Army.

" Army. The Approach of Night con-
" cealed, the Proximity of GHENT fa-
" voured their Flight. They neglected
" nothing to repair their loss, to defend
" their Frontier. New Generals, new
" Armies appeared in the NETHER-
" LANDS. All contributed to enhance
" the Glory, none were able to retard the
" Progress of the Confederate Armies.

" LISLE, the Bulwark of this Barrier,
" was besieged. A numerous Garrison,
" and a Marshal of FRANCE defended
" the Place. Prince EUGENE of SA-
" VOY commanded, the Duke of MARL-
" BOROUGH covered and sustained the
" Siege. The Rivers were seized, and
" the Communication with HOLLAND
" interrupted. The Duke opened new
" Communications with great Labour, and
" greater Art. Through Countries over-
" run by the Enemy, the necessary Con-
" voys arrived in Safety. One alone was
" attacked. The Troops which attacked
" it were beat. The Defence of LISLE
" was animated by assurances of Relief.
" The FRENCH assembled all their
" Force.

"Force. They marched towards the "Town. The Duke of MARLBO-"ROUGH offered them Battle, without "suspending the Siege. They abandoned "the Enterprise. They came to save the "Town: they were Spectators of its "Fall.

"From this Conquest the Duke hastened "to others.

"The Posts taken by the Enemy on "the SCHELDE were surprised. That "River was passed the second Time, and "notwithstanding the great Preparations "made to prevent it, without opposition. "BRUSSELS, besieged by the Elector of "BAVARIA, was relieved. GHENT "surrendered to the Duke in the Middle "of a Winter remarkably severe. An "Army, little inferior to his own, "marched out of the Place.

"As soon as the Season of the Year "permitted him to open another Cam-"paign, the Duke besieged and took "TOURNAY. He invested MONS. "Near this City, the French Army, "covered by thick Woods, defended by

"treble

" treble Entrenchments, waited to molest, " nor presumed to offer Battle. Even " this was not attempted by them with " Impunity. On the last day of August, " one thousand seven hundred and nine, " the Duke attacked them in their Camp. " All was employed, nothing availed " against the Resolution of such a Gene- " ral, against the Fury of such Troops. " The Battle was bloody: the Event deci- " sive. The Woods were pierced: the " Fortifications trampled down. The " Enemy fled. The Town was taken.

" DOWAY, BETHUNE, AIRE, St. " VENANT, BOUCHAIN underwent " the same Fate in two succeeding Years. " Their vigorous Resistance could not " save them. The Army of FRANCE " durst not attempt to relieve them. It " seemed preserved to defend the Capital " of the Monarchy.

" The prospect of this extreme Distress " was neither distant nor dubious. The " FRENCH acknowledged their Con- " queror, and sued for Peace.

These are the Actions of the Duke of MARLBOROUGH,
Performed in the compass of a few Years,
Sufficient to adorn the Annals of Ages.
The Admiration of other Nations
Will be conveyed to latest Posterity,
In the Histories even of the Enemies of BRITAIN.
The Sense which the BRITISH Nation had
Of his transcendent Merit,
was expressed
In the most solemn, most effectual, most durable Manner.
The Acts of PARLIAMENT inscribed on this Pillar
Shall stand as long as the BRITISH Name and Language last,
Illustrious Monuments
Of MARLBOROUGH's Glory,
and
Of BRITAIN's Gratitude.

Rows of stately trees describe an open square on the east and west of this column; but soon converging behind to a moderate breadth, and breaking into groups and clumps of different forms and magnitudes, they form a charming vista to an almost undetermined length. Through this vista formerly lay the road conducting to the grand approach; a straight reach of more than two miles, without much diversity in the objects, and with too great formality to please. It now takes a happier direction along the edge of the lake

lake to QUEEN POOL, then enters a low bottom with noble steeps in distinct masses, the sides of which are adorned with pendent groves and clumps of different growths; and slowly gaining the level, at last terminates in the parallel of the palace and pillar; reaching the same point with the undeviating vista, which in its present application is a real establishment.

The ancient Roman road, generally know by the appellation of AKEMAN-STREET, crosses the vista from east to west; and may be distinctly traced near the north lodge. Where the AKEMAN has been broken up, which, as lovers of antiquity, we lament has been done where it could not be necessary, its materials appear to have been an immense congestion of rubble and stones, such as the vicinity supplied. Its ridge, however, in many places is still entire, and exhibits a proof of the persevering industry, the indefatigable pains, and the public spirit of the Roman colonists. At a small distance beyond the park, and a little to the right of

of the AKEMAN, in the parish of STONESFIELD, a tessellated pavement* was discovered in 1711, which was then generally supposed to be nothing more than the site of a Roman general's tent. In 1779, near the same spot, the areas of several other large apartments were found with curious tessellations, and borders, at once admirable for beauty and device. Adjoining was a hypocaust, and a bath, and other remains of Roman architecture in brick of the most durable texture. These have been chiefly removed or demolished; however, considerable masses of the pavements are preserved by Thomas Walker of Hensington, Esq. and correct drawings of the whole, by Lewington, of Woodstock (who saved copies), are in the possession of the Antiquary Society.

But this park is still more celebrated for its magnificent royal palace, commonly called the MANOR HOUSE, the frequent and favourite retreat of several kings of England at various periods, till the reign

* See Hearne, Pointer, Pitiscus' Lexicon, and the 2d Vol. of the Supplement to Montfaucon's Antiquities, p. 39.

of

of Charles I. when the succeeding interval of civil dissension and anarchy laid it almost wholly in ruins. It was not however entirely demolished, till after the building of Blenheim *; when every trace of the ancient edifice was removed, and two sycamore trees were planted to mark its site.

Where yon spread trees wave o'er the crystal stream,
And shew inverted by the solar beam;
There where the margin's daisy mantled side
Shelves down to kiss the congregated tide,
An ancient palace stood,—the lov'd retreat
Of Britain's Monarchs from the toils of state;
Where, dropt the weight of diademic power,
The King, in private, spent the tranquil hour;
New schemes contriv'd, or ponder'd on the past,
Nor felt time slowly lag, nor fly too fast.

On entering the park from Woodstock, these present themselves on a bold elevation beyond the river, at a small distance from the bridge: their growth is luxuri-

* On levelling the site of the old manor-house, 1723, a coffin was dug up, in which was found a gold ring, of about ten or twelve guineas value, inscribed with these words, "REMEMBER THE COVENANT."

LELAND's Coll. by Hearne.

From prints and drawings still remaining, it appears that the palace of Woodstock was a magnificent and extensive structure.

ant;

ant; their foliage of the most vivid green; they spread their broad arms on every side, and seem to guard the spot with religious veneration. Though their appearance is cheerful, though the pensive has no share in the picture; a philosophic mind can hardly view them without impressions more strong than the most splendid ruin could have excited. At the sight of a ruin, it is natural to indulge reflections on psst scenes, to recal images of ancient grandeur, and to connect what remains with what is lost. Here we cannot connect, but we may create.—Fancy is at liberty to raise the pile, to fashion its ornaments, and to adapt its appendages without a guide, and without controul; and fancy will ever exceed realities.—We thus erect the visionary palace;—we people it with the gay, the illustrious, and the good; we listen to the voice of melody—we pourtray the sprightly dance, the proud levee;—at once they vanish; and we wake to the recollection of the vanity of art, and the ravages of time, which here shew their completest triumph. Of the

regal

regal dome, not a wreck remains; and where kings gave audience, and vassals knelt, the herds crop the velvet green*.

Campos ubi Troja fuit.

Oblivion broods upon the levell'd lawn,
And fly the tints by history's pencil drawn.

This place can boast a very remote antiquity. History informs us, that King Ethelred, who began his reign in 866, held a parliament at Woodstock Palace; and Lambard, in his Collection of Saxon Laws, recites several statutes then and there enacted. His brother, the illustrious ALFRED, who mounted the throne in 872, not only occasionally resided at Woodstock, but, according to a MS. in the Cottonian library, spent so much of the little space here, in which he was disengaged from his numerous wars, that he translated *Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ*; and about the same time he is supposed to have founded the University of Oxford.

* On some new improvements of the ground in the vicinity, in 1791, several natural and artificial curiosities were discovered; among the rest several coins of the Roman Emperors. Might not a Roman villa have originally occupied the spot?

Here sacred ALFRED, victor of his foes,
Indulg'd a studious, and a mild repose;
Undrew the veil that wrapp'd the moral page,
And sooth'd by classic arts a barbarous age!
Bade science bloom with renovated grace,
And clasp the Muses in a close embrace.

Camden, in his Britannia, says, that King Ethelred, father of Edward the Confessor, "Apud Woodstock olim ordinum conventum habuit, et leges tulit;" that is, held a convention of the states at Woodstock, and passed laws. And from the censual roll, or survey made in the 18th year of William the Conqueror, commonly called Doomsday Book, it appears that Woodstock was then a borough, and that the demesnes were afforested. Rous, the historian, tells us, that this was the first park in England: in point of natural beauty and elegant embellishment, it still maintains priority! Dugdale seems to be of Rous's opinion; and William of Malmesbury, and others, inform us, that King Henry I. furnished it with foreign wild beasts, which he procured from other princes, or bought up at a great expence. Certain it is, that this monarch at least beautified the palace, and surrounded the park

park with a wall, which in many places still remains; whether he built them from the ground is by no means so clear *.

At the mention of Woodstock, the name of Henry II. naturally occurs: for who has not heard of HENRY and ROSAMOND! This celebrated beauty was daughter of Walter Lord Clifford. At the early age of fifteen she possessed sufficient charms to captivate a warrior king, who seduced her from her friends, and contrived a bower for her reception, and a labyrinth by which her romantic retreat might communicate with the palace, and prevent any surprisal from the vindictive jealousy of his Queen. This precaution, however, is well known to have proved ineffectual; and the lovely

* Not only the park, but the town of Woodstock was made by Henry I. And indeed the town soon flourished on account of the famous park,—LELAND's Collect.

The town of New Woodstock is certainly much more ancient than the reign of Henry I. though it is probable it might then rise into some consequence. Nevertheless, as the name implies, its origin is less remote than Old Woodstock, which is still one of the demesne towns, and has vestiges remaining of its former greater extent.

frail

frail one at length fell a victim to the resentment of the injured and the implacable Eleanor.

> Ill-fated-Fair! by HENRY led astray,
> And taught to tread Seduction's thorny way;
> Lur'd from parental arms, ere Prudence' call
> Fix Virtue's wish, or pictur'd Vices fall;
> Immur'd by Love in solitary bowers,
> And doom'd to wither like the desert flowers!

The manner of her discovery, and the nature of the death she suffered, are variously related, and much disputed; and authentic history does not furnish us with a clue to unravel them. Rosamond was buried in the choir of Godstow nunnery, near Oxford, where a magnificent tomb was erected to her memory*, surrounded with tapers continually burning; till the beginning of King Richard's reign, when Hugh Bishop of Lincoln, in his primary visitation, came to Godstow; and being offended at the extraordinary veneration he saw paid to a woman of her unfortunate

* See notices of Rosamond's Tomb in the Gentleman's Magazine for November 1791. p. 985; and of the foundation of Godstow, in the same work for August 1787, p. 676.

description, burst into a fit of zeal, and ordered her remains to be removed, and deposited in a less sacred place. His injunction was complied with; and the nuns interred her in their chapter-house, covering her grave with a flat stone, on which was inscribed no more than TOMBA ROSAMUNDI. What is now shewn for Rosamond's tomb, and some miserable verses recorded as her epitaph, are only inventions to amuse the credulous, and baits for the ignorant; at the dissolution of the monastery more important objects were obliterated, more singular circumstances consigned to oblivion.

Curiosity will be eager to be gratified with an account of her bower, her labyrinth, and her bath; circumstances so universally known by report, and so intimately connected with the scenes described. Of the bower, there is neither authentic history nor drawing extant*—of the labyrinth

* In Antony à Wood's Study, W. 276, there is, however, description of Rosamond's bower, and Woodstock park, supposed to be written by Mr. Aubrey.

inth some traces of the foundation were iscovered, and various utensils, coins, and ntiquities dug up, and presented to Lady Diana Spencer by the workmen, when the ground was levelling, by order of the first Duke of Marlborough. The spring that must have supplied her bath remains, and retains her name; and is truly

"Health to the sick, and solace to the swain."

It is situated in a small dell in the side of the hill, a little to the westward of the grand bridge, and a few paces from the edge of the lake. It gushes from an artificial aperture in the stones which line the cavity on the north to a considerable elevation, with a fall of nearly two feet, and a copiousness and equability in every season, that few springs exceed. Scarcely has it smoothed its ruffled wave before it is received into a capacious bath, about five feet deep, and twenty square, lined at the

For some notices relative to the antiquities of Woodstock, the author of this description confesses himself indebted to the researches of the learned and inquisitive Mr. Price, Keeper of the Bodleian Library.

bottom and on the sides with freestone and fenced with iron palisades. The wate of the bath is so pellucid and tranquil, tha it reflects objects like a mirror; and fo this purpose poets and lovers have assign ed it to beauty, which seems to be in digenous here.

The facing over the fall is formed of dusky coloured stone; the layers termi nate abruptly on the sides with the resem blance of a ruin; and the whole has th air of antiquity. To increase this appear ance, it bears many marks of the univer sal passion—the love of fame. This ha prompted numbers to carve the initials o their names, and the year of the exploi with characteristic rudeness, and with seeming zeal for their preservation. I one part we see names which now, per haps, have no other memorial; in another recent efforts to impress a remembrance by obliterating what former engravers hav left as monuments of their existence. Thu it is in life! in the most important tran actions, in the greatest performances.

In a solitude like this, where the subject and the scene are apt to inspire pensive thoughts, such traces are not unpleasing; they tend to promote one general effect, to which every circumstance here contributes—the love of contemplation. The hawthorn, mixed with woodbines and other shrubs, overhangs the spring, and forms a deep irregular shade; the gadding ivy and its congenerous plants clasp the stones that line the precipice, and fill up the fissures and interstices with their roots. Behind rises a grove, which is rapidly thickening its gloom, and assisting to render the spot more sequestered. The birds carol around; the nightingale, perhaps, pours forth her plaintive notes; and the dashing of the water unites with the reverberations of the neighbouring echo to cherish a soothing melancholy. When this mood has been indulged till relief becomes desirable, we may turn to the palace. The aspect on this hand is more cheerful and open. The sombre, however, still prevails, particularly at even; it is inseparable from the season and the spot. The fol-

lowing inscription was penned under it influence, on a report that an urn wa intended to be erected over the spring if the verse should be neglected, let th moral be remembered!

INSCRIPTION.

Ye Fair! who tread in Pleasure's mazy Round,
Where many a Snare, and many a Gulph is found;
For once reflect! with pensive Step draw nigh,
And let this Moral fix Attention's eye:
" Birth, Titles, Fortune,—all that Fate can give,
" Or the most favour'd of your Sex receive;
" Youth's blooming Grace, ev'n ROSAMONDA's charms,
" All that delights, or captivates and warms,
" Weigh'd in the Scale 'gainst Virtue, are but vain—
" Link'd with fair Virtue, deathless Wreaths obtain;
" While Vice lives only in the Roll of Fame,
" To wake your Pity, or to warn from Shame!"

At Woodstock Palace, Henry II. re-received the homage of Malcolm King o Scotland, and Rice Prince of Wales, in 1164; and likewise conferred the honour of knighthood on Jeffery surnamed Plantagenet, his second son by the fair Rosamond. The nuptials of the Lady Ermengard, daughter of Richard Viscount Beaumont, cousin to Henry, with WILLIAM King of Scotland, were also celebrated here

here with the utmost magnificence, for four successive days.

EDMUND, the second son of Edward I. was born at this place, from thence called Edmund of Woodstock; as well as EDWARD, eldest son of Edward III. commonly known by the appellation of the Black Prince, whose early valour and brilliant exploits, joined to the most polished and conciliating manners, endear his memory to every lover of his country. This gallant prince, who died at the age of forty-six, is said once to have resided at the mansion anciently called PRINCE'S PLACE, now the residence of Dr. Mavor.

Illustrious EDWARD! on thy natal hour,
With partial aspects shone each heavenly pow'r
PEACE from her olive throne triumphant sung,
And fierce BELLONA many a Pæan rung;
The gentle Arts with approbation smil'd,
And War's wild offspring hail'd their favourite child.
O! fitted, or to shine in martial pride,
When hostile legions press on every side;
Or give to Science all her native charms,
And conquer MINDS by Reason's nobler arms!
Fain would the Muse a lasting wreath entwine,
To deck with vivid bloom thy brow divine:
Fain would she sing of POICTIERS' tented field,
And with the Lily grace thy sable shield;
But NATURE's charms recal her wild career,
And fix her, ardent, to a meeter sphere!

Woodstock is likewise the birth-place of THOMAS, the sixth son of Edward III. surnamed in history from the site of his nativity.

To enumerate all the remarkable incidents relative to Woodstock, would be to compose many volumes. It was long the scene of regal pomp and festivity *, and productive of various interesting events, many of which are, no doubt, carried down the stream of time and forgotten.

CHAUCER, the father of English poetry, spent some of his happiest hours at this place; it even contends for the honour of his birth, and unquestionably he has made it classic ground. The park was the scene of his favourite wanderings; and many of the rural descriptions in his poems are borrowed from thence. In his poem of the *Cuckow* and the *Nightingale* we may trace his morning walk from his own house down the vale, through which the Glyme used to wind within its narrow banks, be-

* John Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, buried in Christ-Church Hospital, was slain at a Christmas festivity in Woodstock park, 1389, in the reign of Richard II.

PENNANT's London.

fore

fore it was expanded by art. In his *Dream*, too, he describes the bower, as a white castle, with its sylvan accompaniments of maples. If we make allowance for the rust of age, and the obsolete modes of diction that now obscure his works, no one has ever equalled him in the various walks of poetry he adopted.

Chaucer's house was situated at the right angle of the area before the triumphal gate which has been previously mentioned: the site is at present the property of Mr. Prior; and though few remains of antiquity are now to be traced, the traveller of taste never fails to eye the spot with a fond enthusiasm: he venerates the residence of original genius, and blames that spirit of improvement which has obliterated vestiges, that ought to have been deemed sacred by every Briton. Several writers of reputation mention a huge folio of his works in MS. chained to a reading desk in his house, and which is said to have been extant in the beginning of the present century, or the end of the last: that it once existed we have no doubt; but the precise time

when it disappeared, and what has become of it, are totally unknown.

AKENSIDE's inscription for a statue of the ancient bard, though his memory does not stand in need of such frail memorials, nor is likely to obtain them, will not be improperly subjoined, nor appear inapplicable to the purpose for which it was intended.

Such was old CHAUCER, such the placid mien
Of him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our Fathers. Here he dwelt
For many a cheerful day. These ancient walls
Have often heard him while his legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand pourtraying. Tho' perchance
From BLENHEIM's towers, O stranger! thou art come
Glowing with CHURCHILL's trophies, yet in vain
Dost thou applaud them, if thy breast be cold
To him this other hero, who in times
Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land.

With regard to the former celebrity of this place we may add, that the Princess ELIZABETH was confined at Woodstock by her cruel sister Queen Mary, under the care of Sir Henry Beddingfield; and

her

her life was once in the most imminent danger, from a fire that broke out under the room where she slept: but whether this fire was kindled intentionally, or merely through accident, remains among the number of undeveloped mysteries with which the path of antiquity is strewed.

Yet cannot birth, or fortune's powerful claim,
Beauty's fair form, or virtue's heavenly flame,
From life's fell cares their lov'd possessors free,
Else, why, ELIZA, frown'd the Fates on thee?
Why dropp'd the tear, as from the lattice seen,
The rural maiden, singing, cross'd the green?
But that you felt the crime of being great,
And grac'd a prison, ere you rul'd a state!

While here, she is reported to have shed tears on seeing a milk-maid, singing, pass before the window of her prison, and to have expressed a wish that she had been born to a situation as humble and as happy; a circumstance on which the elegant and plaintive Shenstone has beautifully enlarged.

Hark to yonder milk-maid singing
Cheerly o'er the brimming pail;
Cowslips all around her springing,
Sweetly paint the golden vale.

Never yet did courtly maiden
Move so sprightly, look so fair,
Never breast with jewels laden
Pour a song so void of care.

Would indulgent Heaven had granted
Me some rural damsel's part!
All the empire I had wanted
Then, had been my shepherd's heart.

The following verses were witten with charcoal on the window-shutter of the room where she was confined. They are the composition of a great Queen, and derive their chief merit from this peculiarity.

Oh Fortune! how thy restlesse wavering state
Hath fraught with cares my troubled witt,
Witness this present prisonn whither Fate
Could bear me, and the joys I quit.
Thou causedst the guiltie to be losed
From bandes wherein are innocents inclosed;
Causing the guiltles to be straites reserved;
And freeing those that death well deserved;
But by her malice can be nothing wroughte;
So God send to my foes all they have thoughte.

ELIZABETHE PRISONER.

Anno Dom. 1555.

During the time of the civil wars, the Palace, as has been previously mentioned, suffered irreparable damage by a siege it stood, but chiefly by the mercenary and rapacious

rapacious disposition of the usurper and his dependents, by whom part of the very materials were exposed to sale in 1653. The commissioners who assembled here in 1649, by order of the Rump Parliament, to survey the royal property, and had taken up their residence in the king's apartments, were terribly alarmed by supposed spirits, which incessantly disturbed their rest during their stay: but the real actor in this farce was one Joe Collins, since called the Merry Devil of Woodstock, though at that time dignified with the epithet of Just. This man, it seems, was a royalist, and anxious to impress the commissioners with an idea of supernatural agency against their proceedings; and, perhaps, their own consciences aided the imposture.

A circumstance of this kind would have been deemed unworthy regard, had it not been to introduce a remark on the triumph of true philosophy *, and the decline of superstition.

* Since the first publication of this work, we have had occasion to lament in a neighbouring nation, that a *spurious* philosophy, which when *real* enlightens and humanizes the heart, has evinced stronger prejudices

superstition. A learned doctor, a professor in the University, in the reign of Charles II. fills several pages of his book on Natural History with a detail of the pranks of this imaginary demon, among other reveries as ridiculous, which at this period would disgrace the belief of anility*. What a pleasing revolution! Science is now no longer obscured by barbarous hypotheses, nor true religion sullied, by faith in demons licensed to range, and witches permitted to torment.

prejudices and sanctioned greater enormities than ever could be charged on ignorance and fanaticism. The delusions of ignorance are either pitiable or laughable; but the pride of *false* philosophy, that spurns at religion and morals, is execrable and tremendous.

* Widdowes, who was then incumbent of Woodstock, kept a Diary, in which the story of the apparitions is also related. This ridiculous work was published in 1660, and with it a short survey of Woodstock, taken from ancient authors.

WOOD-

WOODSTOCK.

THE ancient borough of WOODSTOCK is situated on an eminence, near the banks of the Glyme, and enjoys every local advantage that can contribute either to health or pleasure. The amenity of the situation can only be exceeded by the purity of the air, which is so great, that valetudinary persons have frequently been recommended to breathe it.

Here WOODSTOCK, erst amid the sylvan scene *,
Lifts her high brow, and, happy, smiles serene:
WOODSTOCK, belov'd by DIAN's huntress train,
What time those shades confess'd the goddess' reign.

It is governed by a mayor, aldermen, and common-council; and returns two burgesses to serve in parliament. The present representatives are Sir Henry Watkin Dashwood, Bart. of Kirtlington, and Charles Moore, Esq. son of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

* It was formerly within the limits of WHICHWOOD Forest.

In

In 1794, Woodstock contained two hundred and seven houses or separate tenements; and, from an accurate account then taken, one thousand two hundred and ninety-seven souls.

The hamlet of Hensington, lying within the parish or chapelry of New Woodstock, consists of eight houses and forty-eight inhabitants, exclusive of the six elegant alms-houses lately built, and liberally endowed by the Duchess of Marlborough, for poor widows. They stand near the entrance of the borough from Oxford, and are an ornament to the place.

The following sonnet was addressed to the Duchess of Marlborough, on the endowment. Its insertion here is less intended as a compliment to Her Grace, than as an example and incentive for others to do the same. Power, riches, and grandeur are little to be envied, except when they are exerted to promote the less fortunate meritorious, and to relieve the distressed. It is the exercise of those qualities alone that can render them amiable in

in the eyes of others, or a real pleasure to their possessors.

In deep affliction's rigid science bred,
Bent by calamity's oppressive rod,
How many sink the meek submitted head,
Hopeless of help, save only from their God!
The widow weeps, the orphan droops unseen,
While Fortune's fav'rites wear a callous mein.
Yet know, the selfish breast, that cannot feel,
In vain for pleasure leans on wealth or shew;
Ne'er was the bosom stamp'd with transport's seal,
Untouch'd by CHARITY's ecstatic glow.
'Tis this, O MARLBRO' that will gild thy name,
Thy heart delight in retrospective view,
Gain virtue's meed—give pure and lasting fame,
For want and widow'd age a refuge find in you.

The immunities and franchises conferred on this corporation, by the favour of our ancient sovereigns, are very considerable: the charter is almost the counterpart of that of New Windsor: Queen Elizabeth in particular was a great benefactor; and if it were not invidious to exhibit living characters to public view, Woodstock might now boast of a patron, whose munificence eclipses that of all the kings and queens that ever honoured it with their residence.—The town-hall and the church

will

will be lasting monuments of liberality in expence,—of utility in its application!

The inns furnish the best entertainment and accommodation to travellers of every description. These are the BEAR, MARLBOROUGH ARMS, ANGEL, &c. From the recent improvements made in one of them, families of the first distinction may enjoy every comfort and convenience which their own seats could command.

The inhabitants manufacture steel, and gloves, leather waistcoats and breeches, to a very considerable extent; and in both branches, the peculiar excellence of their fabricks has gained them distinguished pre-eminence. In one respect, they have left the fable of Midas, no longer an object of wonder: at their touch the old nails of a horse shoe are converted into articles of infinitely greater price, according to their weight, than the purest gold*. A chain made

* As a well-wisher to a place, in which I have spent some of those years most valuable in the life of man, and which I have uniformly endeavoured to serve, I cannot help expressing an earnest desire

made here, weighing only two ounces, was sold in France for 170l. sterling. The manufacture of polished steel was introduced here by a Mr. Medcalfe about the beginning of the present century.

About thirty years ago, in pulling down an old building near the church, several pieces of ancient coin were found, and among them two of the Emperor VESPASIAN, with this inscription round the head, in characters very legible and neat: VESPASIANUS ROM. IMP. AUG. On the reverse, JUDÆA CAPTA. Indeed Roman coins are still casually found here. That nation indubitably had several stations in this vicinity, and probably one at this place; Alecti Castra, or ALCHESTER on the Akeman, was less than ten miles distant; and the tessellated pavement near Stonesfield is an unquestionable vestige of that once

desire to see some easy and practicable regulations adopted, which would increase the consumption, and fix the just and deserved credit of its two staple manufactures. My ideas on this subject do not concern the public; and therefore I forbear to state them: but it will give me pleasure to find that, by calling the attention of individuals to this subject, so nearly connected with their interest, I have in any degree promoted the objects I have in view.

potent

potent people. But this is not intended as a work on antiquities—if it were, the field is open: yet who would prefer exploring the earth for urns, rusty coins, and half obliterated castrametations, to the contemplation of living art and blooming nature, arrayed in their gayest dress, and captivating with their brightest charms!

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NOTICES,

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